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ABSTRACT

An introduction to the issues involved in converting to one of the many 12-month school schedules is provided in this primer. A brief historical review of school calendars and a summary of various year-round education (YRE) plans is followed by a discussion of the advantages of adopting YRE and an analysis of variables for success or failure. Finally, existing laws, demographics, and effects on students and families are discussed. Current YRE districts are listed and an extensive bibliography is included. (LMI)

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A PRIMER ON YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION

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ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

A Primer On Year-Round Education

1988

Association of California School Administrators
1517 L Street
Sacramento, California 95814

ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

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INTRODUCTION

Year-round education may or may not become the norm in your district during this decade, but as an educational leader, you will be called upon to recite the arguments for and against its many variations. How will it benefit or inhibit children on federal food programs? Migrant youth? Bilingual or learning disabled students? The gifted? Will it weaken or strengthen American family life? What influence will it have on the schools of the 21st century? On maintenance and transportation schedules? Your district's budget?

Whether you are called upon to promote YRE or to protect the status quo, A *Primer On Year-Round Education* can serve as your handbook, right down to steps to follow to put a program into place and to generate community support. If information that you need is missing, there is a reference listing to guide your search for additional answers.

ACSA is pleased to provide this easy guide for school leaders, and the Association encourages handbook users to share their reactions to the publication with me, our elected leaders, and our staff. We also encourage you to expand your involvement in this timely topic through local discussions, presentations to civic organizations, and case studies in educational publications.

Year-round education is a topic, not of the future, but of now, and ACSA urges administrators to serve as visible leaders in its exploration.

Wesley Apker
Executive Director

FORWARD

California schools are increasingly facing multiple, and often conflicting, demands which will more than challenge even the most creative school administrators in the next decade.

They will confront:

- exploding school enrollments in some districts,
- decreasing school budgets,
- insistence on excellence from watch-dog groups,
- cries for more choices from other constituents,
- mushrooming growth among at-risk and immigrant populations, and
- the approaching retirement of many professional staff members at a time when more personnel are needed.

All these facets will interact to create the greatest dilemmas perhaps ever faced by state school leaders.

Pressures to build new schools and renovate many existing sites have brought renewed attention to the optimum use of educational facilities. That a $30 billion investment in public institutions is utilized only 180 of 365 days, that new construction costs range from $5 — $25 million — depending upon whether a smaller elementary school or a larger high school is built, and that the price of land can range from $200,000 to $1 million per acre are among the issues which arise in the discussion.

A long-range perspective on the educational requirements of the state is also essential to informed decision-making. In 1980, the California population was cited at 23.6 million. By the year 2000, it is projected to reach the 32 million mark and by 2030 to climb to 42.7 million, almost doubling figures of 1980. In 1980 the white population was listed at 66.5 percent; the black, 7.5 percent; Hispanic, 19.2 percent; Asian, 5.6 percent, and other, 1.2 percent. By 2000, the estimated figures are: 52.4 percent white; 7.4 percent black; 24.2 percent Hispanic; 10.6 percent Asian, and 1.1

percent other. But by 2030, when the population is close to 43 million, the white population is projected to be only 38.4 percent; black, 6.7 percent; Hispanic, 38.1 percent (equal to the white and double the 1980 percentage); Asian, 15.6 percent, and other, 1.2 percent.

These statistics from "Population Changes and California's Future" (Bouvier and Martin, Population Reference Bureau, Washington, D.C. 1985) confirm many already known facts or estimates. In addition the problems of aging populations — as well as their rapid growth — will also confront communities throughout the state for the next 40 years.

These statistics point to tremendous overburdening of recreational facilities, massive traffic congestion and corresponding air pollution, potential water rationing, bulging prisons, health and welfare crises, loss of agricultural land and timber resources, increasing numbers of English-as-a-second language citizens, the replacement of the infrastructure in the state, and the search for money to fund all these and many more equally important concerns. Cultures, lifestyles, economics, and politics, as well as education in California are facing serious "future shock." The effort to raise test scores pales alongside mounting dilemmas related to the preservation of the biosphere and humankind.

Year-round education can also be viewed as an insignificant worry when seen as a little, isolated change in the school calendar. But witnessed as a small part of the whole of the effort of education to help confront rapidly changing societal futures, year-round learning may be able to make a positive contribution toward the creation of a new face for California.

If mandated for most all families, year-round calendars can immediately increase enrollment capacity within existing and projected buildings, thus saving both money and land. Even on the more preferable voluntary basis, they can contribute to the philosophy of choice — of alternatives and options — for those participating in all, or part of, the next 40 years of learning in the state. Year-round education can assist in the transition of California from 1990 to 2030.

DON GLINES, Ph.D.
Educational Programs Consultant
State Department of Education
Sacramento, California

January 1988

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW

In most communities, one constant of American education over the past five decades has been the three-month summer vacation; the September to June mandated attendance calendar has enjoyed a virtual monopoly. However, since 1970, leaders of an increasing number of schools have begun to challenge this tradition by arranging for some schools to remain open on a 12 month basis.

Those who advocate such rearrangement of the enrollment pattern have most commonly referred to it as year-round education (YRE), though occasionally it has been labeled "the continuous year plan," or "the four (or three) vacation option." Proponents of this change claim increased educational opportunities, more alternatives for parents, and better utilization of facilities. Not everyone agrees with these assessments. Opponents claim increased annual costs, unnecessary disruption of the status quo, and elimination of sound curriculum organization.

This PRIMER ON YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION provides brief introductions to the considerations involved in converting to one of the many 12 month configurations. It begins with a short historical review of school calendars and a summary of various YRE plans. Reasons for adopting the concept are then examined, and variables leading to the success or failure of YRE are outlined. Finally, the effects on students and families are discussed, existing laws and demographics are introduced, current YRE districts are cited, and information resources are referenced.

California educators are being forced in new directions by such factors as:

— the annual state increase, projected well in the 90s, of approximately 165,000 students, 25 percent of whom are expected to have only limited English language fluency;

— growing minority pupil enrollments, aggregating at the 50 percent level statewide, and 100 percent in some districts;

— rising dropout and at-risk youth populations, now estimated at 37 percent;

— growing parent and student demands for more alternatives and options; and,

— expanding technological capabilities coming in the 21st century, many of which are already on the horizon.

Year-round education is only one of the challenging learning possibilities emerging for the decade of the 90s.

In advocating forms of four season calendars, proponents use YRE, as opposed to YRS (year-round school), for they state that the latter only denotes a mechanical scheduling system designed to house more students. Supporters believe that YRE is a philosophy, a concept related to: the provision of continuous learning opportunities, the improvement of the total educational environment — not just better use of facilities; and the enhancement of the quality of life potential through, whenever possible, the creation of choices for people.

Opponents respond that year-round scheduling increases costs by delaying construction of new facilities while prices escalate; diminishes the quality of teaching; and, most of all, interferes with long established, personal lifestyles. They even oppose voluntary YRE programs, for they are convinced that disruptions caused by allowing some schools to deviate from uniform and conventional practices cause a reduction in quality throughout the entire district. They are most incensed when school boards attempt to mandate year-round education in the community. So strong is their opposition that they sometimes engage decision-makers in serious interpersonal conflicts. The views of both proponents and opponents are considered in A PRIMER ON YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION.

The PRIMER focuses on the concerns of school administrators. But it should prove almost as useful as an introduction to YRE for board members, teachers, parent groups, community organizations, agencies, and committees. It is intended for those new to the concept or for those wrestling

with a specific problem that may be among those necessary to consider before adopting or continuing YRE.

It should be read along with a number of works cited in the bibliography, such as: "Year-Round Education: Year Round Opportunities" (State Department of Education); "Year-Round Education Resource Guide" (San Diego County Office of Education); "Handbook for Year-Round Schools" (Los Angeles Unified School District); "Fiscal and Academic Achievement Reports on YRE" (Oxnard Elementary School District); "Population Changes and California's Future" (Population Reference Bureau); and "Rapids of Change" (Theobald, Knowledge Systems, Inc.)

Most of the additional references should also be consulted, at least by sub-group members of YRE study committees. They offer historical perspectives, evaluation results, implementation mechanics, attitudinal surveys, philosophical approaches, financial impact reviews, pro and con arguments, and future projections. These add depth to the broad outline introduced in this PRIMER ON YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION.

CHAPTER 2

THE SCHOOL CALENDAR

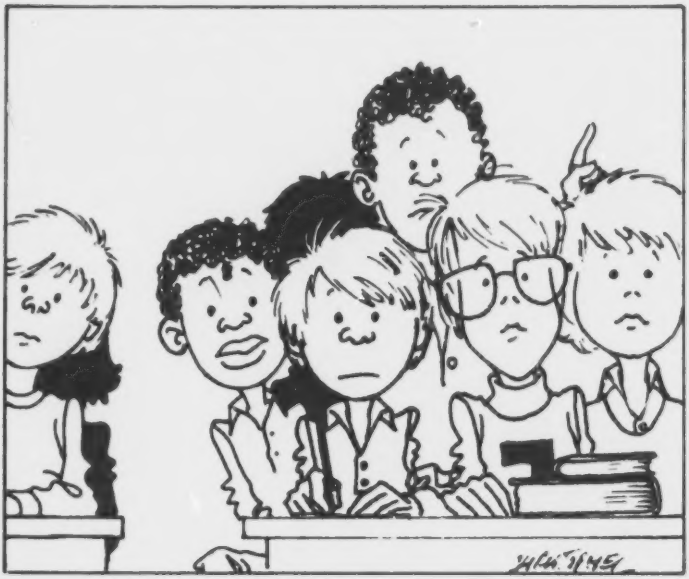
A study of the histories and philosophies of educational patterns in the United States reveals that the school calendar has often responded to the changing needs of the nation. The nine-month school format is not, as many believe, inextricably embedded in the American tradition.

In the early years of schooling, calendars were designed to fit the communities. In rural areas, human resources were needed for agricultural pursuits during the Spring, Summer and Fall seasons. The majority of agrarian schools were open only five or six months, from the last harvest to the first planting. During this same early era, many urban centers scheduled 11- or 12-month attendance years. In 1841, Boston schools, as illustration, were open 244 days, while Philadelphia operated 251 days.

In 1847, the first plan to organize students into grade levels was implemented.

In the years following, as the idea gained support, curriculum was restructured into "graded units." Rural schools were pressured to lengthen their calendars to cover the material, while urban areas agreed to reduce theirs to fit the same mold, increase offerings, and reduce costs. This gradual merging of rural and urban patterns created the beginning of the "standard" school year. And, by the turn of the century, the nine month pattern had become fairly widespread.

Closing schools during the summer in this period of history made sense. At the time, 85 percent of the population were involved in some form of agriculture (as contrasted with only 3 percent by the mid-80s.)



Even so, the September to June, 175-180 day calendar was not commonly accepted throughout the country until World War II.

When war time psychologists predicted increases in production if factory workers were given vacations from tedious assembly line tasks, President Roosevelt declared that defense plant workers should be given paid time-off. With labor scarce, it was necessary to schedule these periods when acceptable short-term workers (such as teachers) could assume the jobs. Thus, the September to June school year took a firmer hold, providing further impetus for the "tradition" of a summer vacation.

Nonetheless, spurred by the post-war "baby-boom," some districts considered a year-round calendar to save space and avoid new school construction. The concept was not new, as various 12 month approaches had been implemented during the 40 years prior to the second world conflict. Even in the 1880's, the year-round notion surfaced in large eastern cities in the form of "summer schools" providing additional help for those who fell behind in their studies, or who had difficulty with English.

Credit for the first "modern" year-round program is given to Bluffton,

Indiana, where Superintendent Willard Wirt introduced a voluntary YRE effort in 1904 to improve curriculum and learning through individualized classes. From 1912 to 1931, Newark, New Jersey, offered a voluntary 12 month program to help immigrants learn English and to enable students to accelerate. In 1917, the Minot, North Dakota, teacher college laboratory school offered a form of YRE to meet the needs of laggards. Omaha, Nebraska, in 1925, tried a version of YRE to provide continuous vocational training programs. And, Nashville, Tennessee, in 1926, sought, through YRE, to improve the quality of education.

Development of the first successful, **mandated**, four-track YRE calendar is credited to Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, from 1928-1938. Ambridge, Pennsylvania, implemented the same schedule later in that period. Both communities created additional space to house an overcrowded population by using a four-quarter, group-paced calendar. Students rotated through one of four vacations — fall, winter, spring, or summer — each 12 weeks and attended school the other 36 weeks, thus achieving a 25 percent increase in enrollment. For various reasons, these early programs did not survive the Depression of the 1930s or the traumas of World War II. Though a number of school boards (Minneapolis as an example) seriously explored year-round education in the 1950s, the concept was not truly reactivated until the 1968-1971 period in communities in Missouri, Illinois, California, and Minnesota.

The successful Russian launching of Sputnik in 1957 once again placed American schools in the spotlight. During the 60s, state and federal funds were allocated for educational expansion and improvement. Curricular and organizational innovations became popular in a minority of districts. The experiments were short-lived, for, by the early to mid-70s, inflation and decreased federal funding left many districts with increasing enrollments and inadequate financial resources. With no money for portables, with alternatives such as double shifting student enrollments rejected as undesirable, and with the impact of innovation from the 60s still felt, pioneering school districts gradually considered the re-birth of year-round education. During the 1968 to 1976 period, 57 California school districts adopted some variation of a 12 month calendar, as did a number of districts in 21 other states.

The late 70s, however, saw another change in societal conditions, as declining enrollments, tax revolts, and demand for the "basics" led again toward uniformity in the schools. Year-round calendars were dropped in

some communities. The idea was abandoned or placed on hold in approximately 50 other potentially ready districts in California alone. The stock market attitude had again taken its toll: the YRE bull market had succumbed to control by the YRE bears.

In the early 80s more schools began to consider YRE again, this time not for its better space utilization, but for the possible educational benefits. A single, rather than a multiple, track approach was proposed and often adopted to offer calendar variations and options in a number of communities without the stigma of mandating the change for anyone. However, during all this fervor, the nine month calendar remained firmly entrenched, as only some schools in 40 to 50 of the then approximately 1,044 California school districts actually implemented the concept. Tradition maintained control, as the majority continued to favor the conventional, three-month, summer vacation.

Upon reflection, though, school calendars over the past two centuries have made some attempt to meet the conditions of the existing society. The current and projected social and economic trends have once more raised interest in adjusting the more common, mandated nine month pattern. In some communities the impetus is space; in others it is the desire to offer more options for family lifestyles. For many, the concern relates to possible improvements in curriculum for all and higher test scores for disadvantaged students. Year-round education advocates believe a blend of each of these ingredients is the ideal. The large majority of school districts have not expressed much interest; but, in fairness to potential future educational programs for youth, the pros and cons of every calendar should be re-examined in planning for the schools of the 90s.

CHAPTER 3

YRE PLANS AND INTERSESSIONS

The term "year-round education" has often been misunderstood. Many envision children at their desks for 52 weeks with no breaks. In reality, in current YRE calendars, students attend school for the same number of days as they would in the conventional nine month schedule, but vacations as well as classes occur throughout the 12 months.

In addition to year-round education (YRE), and year-round schools (YRS), the term "continuous learning year" (CLY) is sometimes used. YRE and CLY in most minds are basically the same, though educational futurists use continuous learning to denote the availability of educational opportunities all year without regard to calendar schedules. In conventional thinking, both terms refer to rescheduling the 180 day school requirement. The phrase "extended school year" (ESY) is occasionally heard, but this concept relates to proposals to add days to the school calendar — for, perhaps, a total of 200, as opposed to the present 180 days. There have been experiments with such a plan. For example, Hayward, California, from 1968 to 1975 in the Park Elementary School, combined four 50-day learning blocks with four 15-day vacation periods to create an extended, year-round calendar. It was very successful, but the Legislature did not renew the special funding for this experimental project. Legislators feared that many other districts might request the same consideration and that, ultimately, the state would not be able to afford statewide funding for four additional weeks.

When the decision is made to adopt a year-round education calendar,

there are multiple potential designs which can be implemented. In theory, YRE is a concept offering more than 16,000 variations — a different one for every district in the nation. At present there are over 20 variations of YRE patterns in school districts throughout the United States. At least another 30 have been proposed on paper but never implemented in an actual school setting. Following are brief descriptions of the more common calendar configurations used during the 70s and 80s or realistically proposed as acceptable for the era of the 90s.

QUARTER PLAN

The school year is divided into four, 12-week quarters. If the program is voluntary, students elect to attend any three of the four sessions to equal one school year. If mandatory, students are assigned to three of the four to balance enrollment among the sessions. The curriculum is organized into 12 week quarters. This plan can accommodate a maximum gain of 25 percent in enrollment. (25 percent of the new enrollment of 800 in a school built for 600; some YRE advocates claim 33% increase, as 200 more is an increase of one-third of the old enrollment of 600.)

QUINMESTER PLAN

The Quinmester offers five nine-week semesters, terms, or "quins." Students may attend any four of the five if the plan is voluntary; they are assigned to four of the five if mandated. More popular at the high school level, the curriculum is organized into nine week units to make possible the most combinations of "quins" for the students. This plan allows a 20 percent increase in enrollment to be accommodated.

45-15 PLAN

The 45-15, or 9-3 plan, has been particularly popular at the elementary level. The calendar is divided into four, nine-week quarters, each separated by a three-week vacation. There are three variations: the block or single track, the staggered or multi-track, and the flexible.

Under the block plan the entire student body, and certificated and classified staffs, share the same schedule of nine weeks of school and three weeks of vacation.

The staggered plan divides students into four separate groups or tracks. The program is in continuous operation, with only 75 percent of the

population in school at one time. Thus, when tracks A, B, and C are in the building, group D is on vacation. When D returns, A vacations. This plan enables school enrollments to increase 25 percent.

The flexible 45-15 assigns students to tracks or groups. But because the curriculum is individualized — especially in reading and math — families have the opportunity to make adjustments in attendance patterns. They might miss three weeks in the middle of their nine week period for a special travel opportunity or illness, but can complete the missed days during the scheduled vacation, or by changing to a different track, at least for that year. Individualized curriculum is the key to the successful implementation of the flexible 45-15.

60-20 PLAN

While the 60-20 plan is similar to the 45-15, it divides the year into three 60-day sessions interspersed with three 20-day vacation periods. Students rotate 60 days in, 20 days out. The three variations of the 45-15 — the block, staggered, and flexible — can be applied to the 60-20, too. Like the 45-15, 60-20 schools are able to accommodate 25 percent more students. Both the 45-15 and the 60-20 can be implemented on either a voluntary or mandatory basis, as can most of the present YRE configurations.

90-30 PLAN

The same patterns, in almost all aspects, as described for the 45-15 and the 60-20 apply to the 90-30. The major difference is that students attend school for 90 days, vacation for 30, attend for 90 more, and then vacation for another 30. Secondary schools seem to prefer the two longer teaching and vacation blocks, while elementary schools often prefer the four, shorter, nine-week cycles. The 60-20 has been the compromise plan in some districts.

CONCEPT SIX PLAN

Concept Six divides the school year into six sessions of approximately 43 days each. If implemented as a single track, everyone follows the same schedule. If mandated, the student body is separated into three groups, only two of which are in school at any one time (A and B are in the building, while C vacations; when C returns, B goes on vacation.) Students attend two consecutive sessions, vacation for one, and then repeat the cycle to equal

four on and two off. Where 180 days are required, the additional days beyond the 164-172 possible under Concept 6 can be earned by overlapping the groups into half-day sessions at the opening and closing of each term, through independent study and intersession programs, through creative off-campus activities, or by increasing the number of minutes of school each day to equal the total earned in 180. Through the Concept Six Plan, the school facility can accommodate enrollment increases of 33 percent. It has been popular for very overcrowded conditions, especially in high schools, where the plan more closely aligns itself with the existing curriculum.

CONCEPT EIGHT PLAN

In Concept Eight, the year is divided into eight, six-week blocks. If the plan is voluntary, students choose any six of the eight. If mandatory, students are assigned six sessions to balance the enrollments, usually in three consecutive learning terms followed by one vacation. An advantage of Concept Eight is that almost any combination of six week blocks can be constructed, giving great flexibility for vacation, work, and special need arrangements. The plan requires that the curriculum be placed in six-week units. With careful scheduling, a 25 percent increase in enrollment can be accommodated. It is a good compromise for elementary schools, which prefer three to four week vacations, and secondary teachers, who prefer nine to twelve week blocks. Concept Eight works well, K-12.

CONCEPT 16 AND CONCEPT 12 PLANS

Concept 16 and Concept 12 are basically the same. Concept 16 consists of 16 three-week modules. Students select or are assigned to 12 of the 16 to complete their 36 required weeks. They may attend additional three week modules as intersessions, as in most other YRE plans. Concept 12 consists of 12, four-week modules, with students enrolled in nine. With the curriculum in shorter, three-week units in Concept 16, students have the potential option of entering or leaving at any three-week interval. For vacations there is the possibility of several three-week breaks, or of combining them into six, nine, or twelve week blocks of time away. These concepts can save 25 percent space if students are assigned to four tracks, while Concept 12 can save 33 percent space on the basis of three assigned tracks, with eight modules in the building, and one module in community- or independent-study-based learning.

MULTIPLE ACCESS PLAN

This program is a partially individualized 45-15 plan arranged in a format to allow students to enter or leave at any three week interval. The curriculum is usually in nine week units, as in the traditional 45-15, but it can be in three week blocks or individualized. It is designed to provide the stability of nine or three week learning blocks, but to allow students access throughout the year, rather than be forced into the rigid rotation of the traditional 45-15 pattern. It is more feasible in a voluntary program; but with modifications, it can be used to save space. The concept appeals to high school students who can select from a variety of attendance and scheduling alternatives.

60-15 OR ORCHARD PLAN

Students attend three, 60-day terms in this plan, separated by three, 15-day vacation periods. This modification provides for a shorter, but common, all-school summer vacation. If mandated, it can save 20 percent space. The curriculum, though, must be placed in learning modules that can be taught to overlapping groups. When 80 percent of the class are studying the Civil War, 20 percent are on vacation. When the latter return, the 60 percent who are not leaving for vacation may embark on a study of the Spanish-American War. But those returning to that same classroom must begin their engagement with the Civil War. Individualizing the curriculum makes the task much easier. It has been labeled by some in California as the "Orchard Plan," after the name of the school in Utah where this approach was made feasible.

25-2 PLAN

Students attend for five weeks, vacation for two weeks, and then repeat the cycle. The annual schedule thus consists of seven 25-day learning blocks and seven 10-day vacation periods. It has been advocated for students who have attention span or special year-round learning needs, such as continuation school or special education students. As with the other calendars, though, it can be used for any level. It has been more successful as a single track plan, but with careful scheduling, can be used to create additional space. A variation of this plan has been the 25-1 which offers eight, five-week blocks, separated by eight, one-week blocks, with four weeks "left over" for holiday scheduling. One calendar provides 175 days,

the other 200. Adjustments can be made to conform to a 180 day mandate.

SUMMER TERM/EXTENDED YEAR PLANS

Neither of these is a true, year-round education program in the accepted sense of the current concept. However, they are related. Scheduled Summer Term classes offer continuous learning integrated with the September to June classes, in contrast to traditional four to six week, discontinuous summer school courses.

The Extended Year does not save space or provide choices, other than more days in the school year. Students may attend any number of days, separated by short vacation breaks. The more common proposed pattern is the 50-15, where students attend 50 days, have 15 off, and then repeat the cycle for a total of 200 days.

TRIMESTER PLAN

The Trimester Plan has been discussed in traditional schools for years as a method for creating a full summer term or extended year and in year-round circles as a system for increasing space by 33 percent. The "mechanics" of scheduling enough days for each "mester" without using Saturdays, shortened holiday schedules, more minutes in the day, or overlapping individual trimester schedules have thwarted most efforts. The short trimester calendar has long been purposely suggested for "academic oriented" schools as a means for accelerating rapid students through school in less years, thus alleviating boredom and providing for earlier college entrance. It would also create much more space in overcrowded schools. The Trimester Plan offers three equal terms, with students attending two and vacationing for one. The most commonly proposed "mester" is one of 17 weeks, thus creating the "tri" concept of 51 weeks and one common period at Christmas. Other single holidays are subtracted as an attendance day when they occur. Despite the problem of meeting the 180 day requirement, the Trimester Plan has potential for creative space saving and different patterns of curriculum.

FIVE STREAM PLAN

A number of five stream (track), five cycle continuous learning year plans have been proposed, each of which contains educational advantages not found in the four stream plans. One five stream approach could provide

up to 200 days of instruction, potentially of importance for educationally disadvantaged students. An "off-shoot" of the five stream concept has occurred in schools which offer four YRE tracks, and one traditional nine month track. The five stream calendar (of which there are several variations) staggers entry of the five groups, learning cycles from six to nine weeks, and vacations from two to three weeks. This increases the space by 20 percent, but provides for longer school years for each stream, as illustrated by the following scheduling pattern:

— Group I begins July 1 and attends two weeks before vacationing;

— Group II enrolls for four weeks (actually 19 days) before vacationing;

— Group III attends for six weeks and then vacations;

— Group IV attends for eight weeks, then vacations;

— Group V vacations the first two weeks, then attends for eight weeks.

The total pattern between July 1 and June 30, then, for Group III reads: school 28 days (holidays are accounted for in each stream); vacation 10 days; school 39 days, vacation 10 days; school 43 days, vacation 10 days; school 39 days, vacation 10 days; school 39 days, vacation 10 days; and school 10 days — to end of one year. This provides 198 days of school and 62 days of vacation.

COMMUNITY YRE PLAN

In this unique but potentially very rewarding concept, the enrollment of the school may be doubled, providing maximum utilization of the building. One pattern of scheduling which blends with this plan is the four quarter calendar. At any one time, 50 percent of the enrolled students are in school taking the usual classes, while 25 percent are on vacation. The other 25 percent are involved in community projects as part of their 180 day school contracts. They might design such activities as:

— interning in a mental health hospital (where they can study health, psychology, sociology, and economics);

— understudying the actors in a play (drama/art/music credits);

— teaching English and language arts to limited English speaking students (English/language art credits); and

— participating in Outward Bound programs (physical education, health, psychology, and social studies credits.)

With 600 in the building, 300 on vacation, and 300 in the community each quarter, the previous capacity of 600 has been increased to 1200

students with no construction costs or space shortages. It is an exciting plan for those who want a compromise between tradition and innovation.

YRE-WITHOUT-WALLS PLAN

The arrangement is patterned after the Parkway (Philadelphia-1960s) school-without-walls plan, but on a year-round rather than a nine month calendar. Such an approach allows students to learn full time in the community. It can be individually or group scheduled. But for all who enroll, that amount of space is saved from a traditional school building. Further, a more effective curriculum is developed for those who prefer the majority of their learning activities outside the school walls. It is primarily designed for middle and senior high students who can find transport to various parts of the city.

Additional space on a YRE plan can be created by providing a "voluntary-mandatory" vacation policy. As the school is open 240 or more days, and as the program is individualized, students, in theory, can attend any of the 180 days they select. However, to maximize resources if community facilities are crowded (for example, if the art museum can only work with 50 at a time), the participants can be required to request first, second and third choices of vacation periods. They are then assigned to ensure that one-fourth of the students and teachers are always out of school. This voluntary-mandatory philosophy can work well to save space wherever the curriculum and instructional offerings are truly tailored to the needs of the individual.

FLEXIBLE ALL YEAR PLAN

The Flexible All Year approach theoretically operates continuously, thereby allowing the student or teacher to vacation at any point in the year for whatever length of time is desired, one day, one month, etc. without loss of continuity. The plan is based on the premise that education can and should be totally individualized, both in time and instruction. Curriculum is constructed in self-contained instructional packets which can be used individually or in small groups.

These LAPs (Learning Activity Packages) allow the student to interrupt the school year at any point. Upon return, the pupil begins wherever he or she left the activity. The LAPs can even be taken on vacations for independent study and credit purposes. The Flexible All Year Plan focuses

on learning rather than square footage, but it can save 25-33 percent of the space by placing the students on tracks, or if completely individualized, by utilizing the voluntary-mandatory method of vacation scheduling. The concept was pioneered at the Clarion University of Pennsylvania laboratory school.

PERSONALIZED CONTINUOUS YEAR PLAN

The Personalized Continuous Year, like the Flexible All Year Plan, theoretically is in operation continuously. When used in buildings, both are actually open only 240-250 days. But all 365 days are potentially available, if students are involved in week-end learning projects, earning credit in independent study activities (even on a holiday), or studying, for example, the cavalry-Indian engagements in Montana while on vacation. Unlike other YRE calendars, this plan has no blocks of instructional time or curriculum packages. Learning is entirely personalized and individualized. Students may attend any 180 days or 240 to 360 days if financing, creative use of volunteer community resource persons, additional space in the building, or other such possibilities are available. They may come and go as desired, as long as they are making progress toward the required number of days. Group learning occurs whenever preferred, as most students are together the majority of the year. They can even schedule vacations around planned group activities including sports, music, special science projects, cultural exchange programs, or other exciting learning activities.

Though usually implemented on a voluntary "single but individualized track" concept, space-saving variations can create an additional 25 percent enrollment space by using the voluntary-mandatory plan, where students must be "off campus" either studying or on vacation the number of days needed to create required space. However, unlike most all-year approaches, they may request preferred times away.

This most sophisticated YRE calendar was in place for 10 years at the Wilson Campus School, a pre K to grade 12 laboratory program at Mankato State University, Minnesota, from 1968 to 1978. Wilson was highly successful, according to all internal and external evaluations of the experiment. It was only terminated by the phasing out of campus schools in Minnesota. While it has been piloted in California in continuation high schools, as proven at Mankato, this learning system works equally well for elementary and gifted students and for all other age and achievement levels.

INTERSESSION PLANS

Intersessions are not a YRE calendar, but are optional supplementary programs which may be incorporated into any year-round education plan. Intersession is the YRE equivalent of summer school, but rather than for only one short period in June and July, there can be two, three, four, or five "intersessions," depending upon the calendar selected. Intersession funding is the same as that for summer school; the programs are designed to provide additional educational opportunities. If space is not a problem, as in the single track or block concept, many of the classes or experiences can be held on campus. Where space is at a premium, the majority of the sessions for groups must be held off-campus, though a number of individuals can be on campus for such activities as individualized reading instruction. Well planned, interesting intersessions are a key component of successful year-round programs and support the philosophy of continuously available learning options.

Intersession opportunities can be as basic as supplementary reading and math or enrichment "academies." More exciting are the tremendous opportunities for the arts, environmental sciences, health and physical activities, career and vocational internships, and a multitude of "electives." In addition to using school facilities, intersessions can use, when properly arranged: local theaters usually closed during the day, church basements, YM and YWCAs, mountain camps, local industries and shops, state parks and beaches, athletic fields, fitness centers, electronic media, overseas studies, cultural exchanges, home learning, oceanography at the seacoast, pesticide studies on a farm, and a host of other creative designs. The list grows and grows when there is commitment to the concept of intersessions.

COMMON VACATIONS

All-school, common vacations can be built into YRE calendars for a day, a week, a month, or longer. Some are required by law or strong precedent: Christmas, Thanksgiving, 4th of July, Labor Day, and Memorial Day. Additional days can be attached to these special celebrations, such as two weeks at Christmas rather than one day. Except for the short traditional holiday periods, a common block of time is not required. Extensive common closures are very difficult to schedule in highly overcrowded schools which exist in a number of districts. Where space is not a pressing concern, or in a single track approach, total closings can be designed any time during the

year, as long as each student is able to complete the 175-180 day attendance requirement.

Some elementary districts have tried hard to create a "closed" period during the summer for all enrolled, so that families with students in a non-YRE middle and/or high school can easily plan a vacation together. Most calendars generally provide time off in the warmer months for all students on a rotating basis. This is not a problem, even in non-unified YRE programs. The common closure just adds additional "windows" away from school, allowing families more flexibility in scheduling.

A few schools have purposely planned longer blocks of vacation at specific times of the year. Closing for all of January in a snow-impacted logging community or in a district where many families go to Mexico for that month are two examples. In an outdoor-oriented community, closing two weeks during hunting or fishing seasons is sensible; shutting down for three weeks in May and October in the off-peak periods in a mountain tourist town is an excellent format. The great number of YRE districts, however, currently do not provide for all school closures, except during traditional holidays. It is easy to do in single track or less crowded schools; it is a challenge in overcrowded, four track calendars.

Common vacations, then, except for the required state and federal holidays, are at the discretion of the local district, influenced by space needs, the degree of elementary-high school cooperation, natural climate, ethnic cultures, employment, and personal preferences of the large majority of a community.

CHAPTER 4

CONSIDERING YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION

The majority of school districts considering year-round education were first attracted to the idea to increase the capacity of existing facilities, reduce the need for new construction, and save money. A growing number of communities have been examining YRE with the expressed intention of providing improved educational programs for their students. They are looking closely at how they can better interrelate their curriculum offerings and calendar schedules. In advanced YRE designs, teachers frequently create innovative learning opportunities, and students often plan their own programs several times each year.

Elementary schools have used YRE to heighten creativity and thinking, environmental sciences, and arts opportunities. High schools have utilized the concept for such potential advantages as early graduation, furloughs for enrichment activities, and shared work experiences. The most frequent K-12 enhancements listed are:

— prevention of "learning loss," which may occur when schools close for the summer;

— greater use of individualized instruction and personalized programs of study;

— more frequent evaluation of progress;

— shorter, more varied units of study;

— increased number of interest activities offered during intersessions;

— forced expansion of communication, cooperation, and involvement among the community, parent, and school segments; and,

— multiplied arrangements for integration through expanded open enrollment policies.

Regardless of the purpose of YRE, or the potential for unique benefits, there are several basic facets of school operations which need special emphasis and consideration whenever a proposal surfaces related to continuous, 12 month calendars. Five are briefly considered for illustration.

LEARNING AND CURRICULUM

The students eligible for categorical program funding — migrant, Chapter I, educationally disadvantaged, learning disabled, mentally/physically/emotionally handicapped, and limited English speaking, among others — especially have the potential to gain from a revised school calendar. Possible benefits for these youth stem from four YRE characteristics: shortened vacation and learning periods; continuous school programs over the full year; scheduling which allows for completion of all or more than the required 180 days; and compact units of curriculum, often advantageous for youth with limited attention span interests.

Short, multiple vacations particularly can benefit the educationally, mentally, and physically disadvantaged, those receiving school nutrition lunch services; and non-English speaking pupils. The interruption in the learning growth cycle experienced by many special-needs youth over a three month out-of-school period and the lack of opportunity to utilize English can be minimized through YRE.

Children on federal breakfast and lunch programs need not go without this subsistence for three consecutive months since they do not miss any school meals if they attend all the intersessions.

Continuous programs during the summer months allow children of migrant families to attend school whenever they reside in the district. Under the conventional calendar, migrant youth often miss many weeks of instruction as their parents relocate; some are in school only 50 to 75 days. In YRE districts, migrant children average 135 days; some even earn "attendance honors."

Shortened curricular units — a feature of most YRE calendars — can be especially beneficial for bilingual, learning disabled, educationally handicapped, and others enrolled in categorical special aid programs. It is

easier to cycle these students in and out of "regular classes" when they are ready, rather than waiting until September as commonly happens when enrollment periods follow the conventional calendar.

The majority of students — from the most gifted to the most underachieving — can possibly benefit from the more frequent rotations of school and vacation learning cycles, especially if the district is able to offer continuous opportunities through intersessions and the open door policy of a 240 day school year.

CUSTOMIZING EDUCATION

YRE, according to advocates, can increase the options available for students to customize their learning patterns. In the traditional format, family vacations are restricted to the summer months, except for the two and one week common Christmas and Easter closures. Certain professions, however, have their high peaks during June, July, and August. Carpenters, moving van drivers, loggers, farmers, resort staff, lifeguards, those low in union seniority in certain industries, and baseball players are just a few of the parents who cannot take long vacations during the summer. They must skip the family vacation, take one without their children, or take them out of school during the winter months.

YRE provides the opportunity for families to select a time together from three or four seasons of the year. Not only does this feature offer more flexibility and choice, but it usually provides for less expensive and less congested vacations. In California, many areas are often too hot or overcrowded in the summer. But in September and October, parks and resorts are not crowded, prices are more reasonable, reservations are not a problem, and the weather is moderate. The traditional calendar eliminates the choice of a beautiful fall vacation to see the leaves turn, to fish or hunt, to relax in uncrowded outdoor environments, or to visit Disneyland without two hour waiting lines.

There are other potential customizing considerations, including the possibility of varied family relationships, for parents can schedule individual vacation periods for each child. This affords the opportunity, when desired, to interact on a concentrated one-to-one basis, doing the things that particularly benefit that individual. Conversely, state law requires that all family members be placed on the same calendar schedule when that is the preference.

ENROLLMENTS

Overcrowding is a primary reason for adopting a year-round calendar in districts where school enrollments are rising, construction costs are increasing, and budgets are decreasing. Often communities cannot afford new buildings, portables, or additions. Even if they can, they may not be able to construct new facilities fast enough to house their overflow of students. Other available options — busing, extended overlapping day schedules, and double sessions — are usually considered less desirable choices. Depending upon the plan implemented, YRE can increase the facility accommodations from 10 to 100 percent; the more common range for most existing plans in operation is from 20-35 percent, with 25 percent being the dominant mean. A school planned for 600 can accommodate 800, if students are grouped into four tracks of 200 each, for one group is always on vacation.

Ironically, a number of districts are faced with an opposite but equally financially taxing problem — that of declining enrollments. YRE can assist in alleviating this problem as well, for these communities may consolidate the resources of two schools into one facility much sooner. School A may hold 600, but now houses only 500 and is continuing to lose students, while school B may accommodate 400, but now enrolls only 300. Both enrollments — a total of 800 youth — can be merged into school A comfortably with a multi-track YRE program. Such consolidation has the potential for saving many thousands of dollars in maintenance. Land can be returned to the community tax rolls. And the district can further benefit from the cash received from the sale of surplus property.

Or the freed facility can be used for special programs: pre-school centers, adult education, recreation (arts, crafts, drama, theater, and sports), or community welfare assistance. All these bonuses are gained without additional construction costs. YRE can even provide facilities benefits in schools that are full, but not overcrowded. Many older buildings lack focused space, such as an elementary school without adequate library, art, music, computer, or applied arts and sciences centers. At the secondary level, such curriculum sites can be expanded, usually a major need in most situations. Through YRE, one of every four classrooms in schools comfortably filled to capacity can be saved for a special purpose.

BUDGET

YRE may provide potential savings for school districts with increasing

enrollments by accommodating more students without additional construction, by consolidating two or more under-enrolled schools, and by providing for facilities not otherwise available in stable enrollment districts. It has the potential to reduce the bus fleet, the number of principals, and the staff of maintenance personnel.

It can be revenue neutral in such a program as the block 45-15 YRE calendar. In this plan, there are usually no savings; but there should be no increased costs, unless special bus schedules and categorical employees are needed in one school, while another 20 remain on a nine month calendar.

YRE can, however, cost more. If the plan adopted requires increasing the length of contracts for secretaries and principals from 10 to 12 months, creating supplemental contracts for nurses and special resource teachers, and forcing more expensive night and weekend maintenance contracts, the total investment may be higher. Some districts have accepted this relatively small amount, determining that overall benefits derived from a continuous learning program are cost-effective in terms of the potential enhancement of the student, family, and community.

OUTLOOK FOR THE FUTURE

Improving educational opportunities for many individuals, customizing school calendars for families, increasing utilization of facilities, and assisting budget control efforts are all viable and potentially rewarding advantages of year-round education.

In addition, continuous, life-long learning is becoming a component of contemporary and projected future societies. New living/learning systems appear to be developing to accommodate the explosion of information, the retraining of people as technology creates essential new skills and eliminates many previously available occupations, and the coping necessary to adjust to rapid change within a caring, safe environment. Year-round education can potentially assist people and society by providing calendar and curricular options to meet existing and emerging life and learning preferences. Some futurists project that we will ultimately have a society without schooling as it is known today, and without either nine month or 45-15 calendars. YRE proponents believe that the concept of continuous lifelong learning can help provide direction and assist in propelling education into the 21st century.

CHAPTER 5

PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

A surprising percentage of the time, successful planning may be more, as the cliche claims, a matter of "dumb luck" than skill. Even so, the traditional planning cycle is often the crucial factor in the ultimate acceptance and success, or the rejection and failure, of any innovative idea. Year-round education is certainly no exception. The first and most important key in implementing the concept is gaining acceptance of it. A sincere commitment to creative resolution of real or perceived personal or professional dilemmas must follow.

Once a true desire for a continuous learning system has been identified within the community — at least among a significant number — the district should seriously structure the planning stage. Periods of no more than one year are generally believed to be the most effective. Mandating YRE in a very large district may take up to 18 months, whereas smaller, voluntary programs should require no more than six months of planning.

Some districts have studied YRE for two, three, or even four years. This is most always the wrong approach, for by that time, the original committee has become discouraged, the superintendent has moved to another job, there are four new board members, and the parent turnover has reached the 50-75 percent level. The program is never adopted. The best approach is to study the concept honestly. If it has merit, adopt it within a year — either on a voluntary or mandatory basis — and implement it soon

after the decision.

If YRE does not appear to have merit in the particular situation, drop the discussion and move on to other issues. Studying year-round education for another year will not change its merits, or the "win/win" or "win/lose" decision for that community. Once YRE is rejected, four years later it could resurface, should conditions, parents, and personnel change enough to encourage new consideration. But it should not be debated for those four years: do it or do not. Coffee table discussions can continue if desired, but it does not help to have it on the front burner month after month.

In planning, the amount of detailed attention that is required varies with the reasons for adopting YRE, the calendar selected, the grade levels involved, the personnel with the responsibility, and the existing circumstances in the school, district, and community. Areas of concern usually addressed include:

- YRE research and evaluation studies,
- public information programs,
- inservice for district personnel,
- curriculum revision and development,
- school organization and management,
- special services programs,
- supplies and materials,
- financial figures,
- maintenance schedule adjustments,
- food service,
- public and private agencies, and
- transportation.

Administrators, teachers, and classified employees must be deeply involved early in the planning stage; their true understanding and ultimate acceptance — or willingness to let others in the district implement YRE — are vital to its success. Later, but still early in the consideration phase, parents, students, community agency directors, and community leaders must engage in the same thorough process of understanding. When YRE is first proposed in most districts, a 30-40-30 split is immediately experienced. Thirty percent of the professional and lay communities wholeheartedly support the concept. Forty percent are not sure — they need more information and additional time to study. Thirty percent are almost always opposed and among these 10 to 15 percent are usually very emotionally — almost violently — opposed to ever accepting any change in calendars. It is

interesting to note that each of these general group positions is in the minority.

To overcome this almost universal initial split, it is essential to create a win/win spirit where, whenever possible, everyone wins. Most current education decisions are win/lose in nature — someone wins, someone loses, often by a 4-3 board vote. Such splits related to the adoption of YRE are unnecessary and counterproductive for the youth being served. Decision by best judgment, as contrasted with a win/lose vote, or a consensus, is usually the preferable way to achieve harmony in the consideration of year-round education.

If that is not possible, a 70 percent majority probably can be achieved. In beginning the process of understanding in the community, little time or encouragement need be spent on supporters; they want YRE and will not change their opinion unless serious flaws surface. The key to acceptance is the level of understanding among the 40 percent in the middle. They need to reach the position where, if YRE is voluntary, they are willing to allow it to be implemented for those electing the new calendar, or if it is mandatory,

they accept and support it as the best of the possible alternatives. The 30 percent against require little time, for they are not going to change their vote, except for a few on the near-middle fringe. By polite, factual, and firm information, they can be nullified. In a voluntary situation, they will still be served by having "their" nine month calendar. In a mandatory win/lose situation, as in political votes, they need to be told that, unfortunately, they did "lose." They never fully accept the vote, continuing to find ways to oppose it and planning later to have it rescinded. But for the present they are overcome, and the program can be installed.

When the 30 percent "for" are joined by the 40 percent in the "middle," 70 percent support is created for YRE to be implemented on a voluntary, or if necessary, mandated basis. When it is entirely voluntary, those finally enrolling their youth in the program the first year usually total between 50 and 55 percent. The highest support figure has reached a rare 90 percent; the lowest 30 percent. Aids to community understanding include:

— small group "coffee clatches" in homes;

— one-to-one discussions in the grocery store or at parent-teacher conferences;

— student classroom discussions;

— positive media coverage;

— large group meetings;

— open, honest, calm, but firm explanations;

— surveys of preferred parent job/vacation cycles;

— financial and facility chart presentations; and

— enthusiasm from trusted, respected school teachers and administrators.

Depending upon the reasons underlying the possible adoption of YRE, there are several options for implementation. A comprehensive mandatory approach requires all students to attend school on a year-round basis. The semi-mandatory plan places the great majority on year-round tracks, but does provide a traditional calendar for those with special needs or extremely strong preferences. Mandatory YRE is primarily utilized in either very overcrowded districts — dividing students into three or four equal groups — or in districts with few schools, where it is necessary to have all students on the same single track to enable the educational programs to function.

Voluntary implementation of YRE in a district can follow one or more of several related paths. Organizing methods can include one school on a single or multiple track, one track-within-a-school, one school of a

neighborhood cluster of four sites, several individual schools in key locations, or school-within-a-school formats in every building. There are a number of other such very feasible mechanical formats. Plans can be tailored for almost any district and any existing situation, where there is strong commitment, even if only 10, 20, or 30 percent of the students enroll the first year.

Mandating YRE is the most difficult course, not because of organizational problems but political problems. No matter how valid the reasons for mandatory YRE, the risk of dissension is great and almost automatically assured, at least from a vocal minority. Trying to change traditions in education — the nine month calendar is only a tradition, not educationally essential — creates conflict. In mandating YRE, those who prefer a nine month schedule are placed in a "lose" position; they find themselves in the same situation as are those who now favor year-round, but who reside in a traditional calendar district. Splitting the community into winners and losers causes friction. It can create extreme opposition among a segment of parents and teachers and some high school students. A few districts have had YRE opposed when it became a pawn in efforts to balance ethnic minority enrollments. The bitterness from the 15-to-30 percent opposition adds to the problems inherent in the first year of the new program and can undermine successful implementation, if the complaints and tactics of this group are not fully understood, addressed, and diffused.

Not all districts which mandate YRE experience a high degree of difficulty. If the change is accepted as the best solution in the face of major facility and financial dilemmas, or if YRE is designed to better meet community employment patterns or climate factors, dissent is usually minimal. If YRE is to be imposed, totally mandating it does enable the district to focus on creating a satisfactory single calendar plan, rather than fragmenting efforts among two or more calendar options. Mandating may simplify YRE bus routes and the demand for new buses, depending upon whether students are geographically assigned to tracks, have completely open selection, or are restricted by the ability of the district to offer specialized curricula.

Ordering supplies, signing contracts, planning budgets, registering students, assigning rooms and teachers, providing books and instructional materials, and the many other administrative, business, and clerical responsibilities are all eased if a traditional calendar option is not available with YRE. Teacher inservice, special programs, curriculum workshops, and

district resources may be easily scheduled if there is only one enrollment pattern, rather than simultaneous YRE and September to June calendars.

However, years of experience, philosophical beliefs, and policies permitting alternatives all support both YRE and conventional calendars being offered as options whenever possible. Neither approach is the "regular" program; both are "regular," but both are "alternatives." Choice, again is the key word. Providing the selection of either the YRE or the conventional calendar to all families in the district, no matter where they live, or at what grade level they are perched, creates a win/win spirit, and except for the few extremists, eliminates the win/lose split that is created when either the YRE or the nine month traditional calendar is mandated for everyone.

If the preparation stage includes excellent public and professional involvement, and if each person can be a "winner," the transition to voluntary YRE can proceed without the volatile dissension that often accompanies mandated approaches. There will still be some dissent from the bitter 15 percent — the families who are against YRE and who then discover that, of four "clustered" elementary schools, "theirs" is the one selected for YRE. The fact that their children will have to transfer to one of the other three sites retained as conventional calendar options will sometimes cause them to become almost emotionally unstable in voicing opposition. However, when the great majority of the community understands the choices available in "our" schools and envisions alternatives as a winning position for most everyone, positive acceptance and involvement by most brings a refreshing new air of excitement. Innovations in curriculum, instruction, and organizational patterns, and uplifted student, teacher, administrator, and parent morale can result and lead toward the development of the the finest possible learning environments for youth and adults.

Ideally everyone should be enrolled in a calendar of individual choice. But even where district policy provides for both nine month and year-round options, complete satisfaction normally cannot be guaranteed for every person or family. Teachers must be placed where needed, and enrollments must have some degree of balance; therefore, all cannot be on Cycle A, or at Site B, or in the preferred calendar track. Community dissent can occur even where only three of four schools are designated for YRE leaving one for the conventional calendar. Those parents who want a traditional plan have it, but they may still object because their children must be bused several miles to school rather than being able to walk to a school building only blocks away.

In large school districts, this problem is often not as great. "Neighborhood schools" are usually closer in proximity and more choices are usually possible. Frustrations can be reduced in any district, if space can be arranged, by offering both a YRE and nine month option on each of the campus sites. This is an excellent approach, if the preference is to have all students walk to school, or to ease bus scheduling. The mechanics of such a plan are relatively simple; again, commitment is the key. Conversely, the same lack of choice and complaints can arise if the decision, as illustrated by the four school examples, is made to continue three of the four on a conventional schedule, turning only one into a year-round concept to provide for especially supportive families from each of the four schools. Some YRE students will then have to make the longer bus ride rather than just walk a short distance to school.

With optional, rather than mandated YRE, the operational mechanics of a district can potentially become more complicated. But, they need not be viewed as such if YRE provides for district space needs, continuous curriculum opportunities, and/or choices for families — all factors to enhance the community learning systems. Viewed negatively, bus scheduling, in some cases, may not be as efficiently condensed in a voluntary plan as when all schools are on a September to June or mandated YRE calendar. Clerical, administrative, and business duties can be greater, if adjustments in assignments, schedules, and attitudes are not made during the conversion period. Teacher inservice practices, union contracts, and special student services do need to be realigned to provide for both calendar options.

The offering of year-round education opportunities, while maintaining a conventional schedule, does have the potential of dividing district interests and efforts. However, the eventual creation of a win/win spirit and philosophy, rather than the perpetuation of the popular win/lose model which has existed for so many years and influenced so many district decisions, can pave the way for longer term positive gains in community support. Year-round education is not a space pawn, a method of appeasing a minority, or a way of claiming a system of choice. Instead it potentially is one of the many ingredients needed to eventually truly create better learning systems for the future.

CHAPTER 6

ADJUSTMENTS AND OPPOSITION

AMONG ADMINISTRATORS

Administrative reaction to YRE is mixed. Supportive leaders maintain that with the continuous calendar concept, learning opportunities are enhanced and facilities are utilized more efficiently. With multiple vacations, student boredom may be reduced during both the "in-" and "out"-of-school periods. Administrators have reported a decrease in vandalism, illness, and absence. They have used the staggered vacation plan to minimize student gangs by placing members on different tracks. They claim the process of change itself can be a positive factor, for in rethinking the school calendar, almost every educational aspect must be reconsidered and justified. Though not unique to YRE, non-graded, continuous progress learning, individualization, revised testing approaches, and personal, goal-centered evaluations are among the innovations that are particularly suited to YRE and highly visible in some of the outstanding programs.

However, a considerable number of adjustment problems can face administrators, especially with staggered or multi-track schedules. Communication needs are particularly acute for the principal who must keep vacationing students, faculty, and parents informed of policy changes, new programs, and coming events. New teachers, families, and district personnel must be oriented to YRE, if they have transferred from a conventional calendar. Decision making becomes more complicated; pressure situations

place the administrator in the position of making the choice with only partial involvement of staff or postponing it until all members return from vacation and have opportunity for input.

Committees must decide how to, or whether to, receive information from members on "off-tracks." Most schools have resolved this concern by appointing two representatives, each on different schedules, while others request committee members to attend meetings during vacations. The great majority of schools accept the fact that there may always be a few people absent from meetings; they treat that factor the same as an absence caused by illness. Meetings can be tape recorded for absentees. Members may send in comments on tape before the meeting. Inservice activities can be repeated for those who were on vacation. They may see them on videotape, be trained later by a participant-trainer, or simply be absent. If staff are required to return, the inservice programs can be scheduled for the first or last day of the cycle to avoid disruption of personal plans in the middle of a vacation period.

Block or single track plans offer few of these problems, unless the program is the only YRE school in a large community where districtwide activities are scheduled during the YRE "off track" periods. Block programs do minimize the conflicts, when contrasted with multiple-track calendars. With the single track concept, there is little concern in scheduling students. With the staggered approach, assigning students to tracks can be a challenging administrative task.

In staggered-plan YRE schools, all grade levels and curriculum offerings should ideally be available on every track throughout the year, classes and tracks should be numerically balanced. To resolve some of these potential barriers, several districts use geographical track assignments, decreasing the bus routes and preventing the separation of neighborhood friends. However, such a method does not provide for maximum placement of students according to individual needs, preferred vacation periods, flexible scheduling, or curriculum singletons. As a result, most districts do not schedule geographically.

To enhance the concept of choice, parents and students are given the opportunity to select the tracks best suited to their family schedule, on a first, second, third preference basis. If space is at a premium, administrative efficiency is maximized by assigning students to equalize class size. But choice is considered the best practice. Periodic adjustments are required, as transferring students may cause enrollment imbalance. Average daily

attendance can decrease if students join their parents for a mid-cycle vacation and then do not complete the missed days through intersession or by transferring to another track for the remainder of the year.

Other adjustments include concern over maintenance and repairs. Whenever possible, disruptive work should occur in the evenings, over the week-end, or during a common, all school vacation, such as Christmas. Cleaning and remodeling disruption should be kept to a minimum; but groups of students can be moved to special facilities, such as the Media Center, if it is essential to repair or remodel a given room or area during the school week. Hospitals illustrate that even the cleanest, best-kept facilities in town can be kept open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year.

Special school events, assemblies, picnics, athletics, clubs, dances, school plays, and student government programs must be scheduled so that no one track misses a disportionate percentage of activities. Health screenings and school picture-taking must be repeated for the vacationing group or scheduled so that the days for these purposes overlap the tracks. Students participating in sports, drama, debate, and music productions must be on a track that best coordinates with their involvements, or they must return for the events during their vacations. Student Councils must elect one member from each track or arrange an equal rotation of members. Administrators find, too, that publishers, state and county offices, and even their own district support services must cooperate with YRE schedules. Books and supplies cannot arrive for September when school "begins" in July, and special arrangements are necessary for state tests. Though some of these "disruptions" involve single track scheduling, the great majority, and certainly the most demanding on administrators, involve overcrowded schools and multi-track calendars.

AMONG TEACHERS

A key factor in the success or failure of a year-round program is the support of involved teachers. Mandated YRE efforts which leave few options open to staff often generate more ill feelings than voluntary programs do. The 30 percent of district personnel who oppose YRE from the beginning are usually very vocal and enlist union leaders for support. These individuals, often being defenders of the status quo, have a tendency to side with the anti-YRE people. Administrators must work with union personnel

to help them realize that they represent ALL members. What are they going to do to support those in their units who want to teach in a continuous calendar plan?

A voluntary block or staggered schedule has a greater potential for acceptance by teachers. Those who support it are excited and should be given the opportunity to teach in a program they elect. Union leaders should be encouraged to understand this commitment. Though present year-round calendars are not perfect, the problems associated with them are not insurmountable for teaching. Primarily they are administrative; failure to find solutions reflects lack of experience or commitment. The conventional nine month schedule itself has many deficiences for teachers, too. When receptive teachers are involved from the early planning stages, and when all their concerns are openly and honestly considered, they are more likely to accept the idea and become part of the change process, rather than working against it. They learn about and use YRE's potential for expanded learning opportunities for students.

Supportive teachers cite many advantages to the shortened instructional periods in YRE. Without the long summer disruption, they believe less information is forgotten, there is less need for review teaching, higher student achievement, and more continuity in instruction. They believe these shorter breaks enable students and teachers to relax periodically, reducing fatigue, illness, and the need for days off for personal reasons. The short vacation schedules can be restrictive to some teachers who want to complete extended graduate courses during the summer rather than evenings and week-ends. But colleges are creating special classes where significant numbers teach in YRE and are off-track for minimal periods of time. Teachers can "jump" or transfer tracks (from A to B to C to D) during the year they want three months to go to Europe or they can teach in a nine-month program, if one remains in the district, to clear the summer for an extended time period. The first year of YRE implementation is the most restrictive for teachers, for many will not have an extended vacation following the just-completed conventional June closing.

Staggered scheduling does present problems that the faculty and administration must solve collectively. Opposing teachers claim that they are not able to "escape." School continues while they are away. They state they must return for, miss, or make-up meetings, social functions, and athletic events; indeed, they have sometimes been required to attend these activities. They have complained that they use vacations preparing lessons and

materials and that the short periods away provide insufficient time to relax. Most of these or similar complaints can easily be resolved by a change in teacher attitudes, accompanied by the willingness of boards and administrators to increase the personalization of teaching and living preferences.

Through such concern, teachers begin to realize that there can be a dramatic increase in the contract and vacation options available to them. Most choose to elect the same 180 day schedule that the students they teach follow. In this option, the class and the teacher are on the same track or calendar format, attending and vacationing at the same time. Selected teachers might decide to extend their contracts for a multi-track assignment; they then work with students from all tracks, as the youth come and go according to their group or individualized schedules.

Teachers thus can lengthen their contracts by teaching extra days, covering for a vacationing principal or helping with the administrative workload, substituting for sick teachers, or working one or more of the intersessions. Extended contracts provide choices of employment so that staff are no longer forced to supplement their incomes with separate summer work. Teachers can earn $5,000 extra each year in strong YRE districts just by substituting when "off-track." The option is there to help teaching become a "full-time" profession.

It is true that problems can arise in scheduling the contracts of certain personnel: elementary music, art, and hearing therapists, special education teachers, counselors, clerks, and custodians. If such categories of employees have previously been on 10-month contracts, their new arrangements must be designed so that no student on any track is denied service. Special program teachers and their students may have vacations at different times. Thus, discontinuity in learning for these youth is a potential conflict that must be considered. In traditional classrooms, scheduling 30 students into three or more special programs can prove disruptive. One successful solution has been to extend resource teacher contracts to 12 months. Other districts have hired part-time help. Still others have issued contracts calling for four days of service per week over 12 months, rather than five days per week for 9 or 10 months.

Staggered schedules can require teachers to change classrooms after each vacation. This presents the problem of moving and storing teacher and student materials and then relocating them when the new session begins. Schools specifically built for a year-round schedule have storage space

within the classroom pods or in teacher centers, but older schools usually must find storage areas in another section of the campus. Often teacher storage is restricted to "cupboards with wheels." The moving process can be time and energy consuming, if not properly approached. A few districts have made provision for this temporary inconvenience by paying teachers extra for non-teaching "moving periods," by planning a reduced schedule the last day of each cycle, and/or by re-arranging custodial schedules to assist with moving.

One successful plan provides for "teaching teams" sharing the same rooms (or pods), books, materials, and bulletin boards. They consider the space and resources "ours" rather than "mine." Consequently, only a few, privately purchased, personal possessions must be stored, locked, moved, or left with team colleagues to use where helpful. Trying to retain the traditional classroom arrangements and schedules and the "my" versus "our" attitudes does add to transition problems. Even record-keeping can be ponderous, as class composition may continuously change and four sets of enrollment books may be kept by the school. Such problems are minimized when teachers team and when the school moves toward computerized assistance and personalized, continuous, year-round calendar and curriculum systems.

To prevent (or resolve) potential dilemmas or contract conflicts, several questions should be addressed:

How will teachers be involved in the planning?

Will adequate inservice preparation be provided before the change to assure a smooth transition?

Will teachers be able to determine whether they want to work more than 180 days?

Will teachers be provided longer vacations for special travel, family needs, college degree study?

Will teachers have adequate planning days built into the year-round calendar?

How well will the community be informed about the plans under consideration?

Will the discussions honestly and objectively present all sides of the issues?

Will parents, students, and teachers have as much choice as possible about when to be out of school?

Will every attempt be made to create a win/win outcome for everyone?

AMONG COMMUNITY AND PARENTS

Multiple involvements of parents and all other factions of the community have always been important in successful school programs. But in implementing YRE, their role, as with the classified staff, takes on added dimensions. They not only have to understand why it is being proposed initially, but they must remain in continuous support. There should be ongoing orientation and reorientation sessions scheduled through media, small group presentations and one-to-one discussions, for new families moving into the community. Some YRE districts have found themselves in trouble in later years, after successful initial implementation. They had overlooked the fact that, after the initial thrust to "sell" the concept to the community, change was inevitable. Within three years:

— all the 4th, 5th, and 6th grade youth were now in junior high;

— new arrivals had been added to grades 1, 2, and 3, and they grew to grades 4-5-6;

— there were now new grade 1-2-3 classes.

Thus, within a three-year period, over half of the parents of the K-6 elementary school had not been involved in the original planning. This scenerio is especially true in highly transient communities. Therefore, planned "disorientation" (unlearning the nine-month calendar), orientation (understanding the new calendar), and reorientation (for those returning to the conventional calendar) sessions must be provided throughout each school year, every year.

As expressed by the 30 percent negative vote when YRE is first presented, not all parents readily accept the concept. Most parental opposition stems from ties to tradition and is in the form of personal preference, not established fact. They express concern over the potential difficulty of scheduling babysitting for working mothers if there are short, staggered vacation schedules. They believe long summers are needed for complete relaxation, long term vacation projects, and extended trips. They claim children find year-round school too disruptive. They state that some tracks may have too many interruptions when the short breaks are combined with additional regular legal holidays. They insist that it is difficult for families with children on different schedules to take vacations together. The affluent worry about spending time in their mountain cabin or sending their child away to camp for the summer or some similar, related lifestyle.

Community agencies, groups, businesses, and programs are affected by

the implementation of YRE. Among them are the police, YM and YWCA's, Boy and Girl Scouts, church Bible schools, summer camps, park reservations and recreation activities, swimming pool schedules, carnivals and county fairs, back to school sales (in June, not August), and even motel bookings. These agencies, organizations, and businesses must adapt to a continuous school calendar. Initially, the majority of these "communities" oppose YRE. They fear for the continued existence of their programs. They worry over potential loss of income and enrollment, the problem of one-fourth of the youth in a given multi-track school always on vacation, or the single track students "on the streets" in November mixed with "truants" from conventional schools still in session.

These concerned people must be immediately assisted to think differently. They are most in need of disorientation — "unlearning" the way it has always been done for the past 50 summers. Church Bible schools serve as one example. They fear they will close if 75 percent of the K-12 students are in session during the warm months. On questioning, they admit that enrollments are high in early June just after school closes, and again in late August when people return but low when "everyone" vacations in July. When asked to consider year-round Bible schools, they at first object. Later they may realize that with YRE, they could remain open continuously with a small permanent staff, rather than open for a few weeks in the summer with a larger temporary staff. They could "have religion year-round." Often helping people rethink their options will transform organizations such as church groups from major opponents into ardent supporters of both "continuous learning" and "continuous religion."

The concerns of law enforcement agencies can be eased by offering a photo identification card with a color code for each track in the staggered system, or in a block YRE school, by listing true calendar vacation dates. If overly concerned and negative toward a YRE proposal that would have students "on the loose" in October, both police and merchants can be asked what they do differently after 3:00 p.m. each day when students are legally out of school, or on Saturdays, or during the summer. They can be convinced that in a mandated multi-track system it would be much easier to monitor the activities of one-fourth of the youth each month of the year (as three-fourths are always in school), than to monitor none for nine months, and then have to "protect" against 100 percent during the three summer months.

The same concept can be applied when working with YMCA, Girl

Scouts, and other such youth organizations. They can plan seasonal activities for 20 to 30 percent of the youth year-round, rather than only June to September activities for 100 percent. Summer camps can be winterized, become all season camps, and feature family camping. If they only rely on one district for enrollment, they potentially will have fewer students. But most camps draw from many districts. Further, each child usually has a summer break (except perhaps in quarter system style calendars); therefore, they have a block of several weeks to attend camp, if they have the desire and financial means.

In an effort to ease transitions in the community, many YRE schools have planned assistance for organizations and families to adjust to the changes in calendar and their lifestyles. Larger districts have even provided salaried personnel to coordinate YRE, family, and community services. Working mothers are shown how a sitter schedule may be no more difficult to devise than under the conventional calendar; and they are given assistance, initially, if needed. Two decades of experience of YRE since its rebirth provide evidence that family and community impacts can not only be minimized, but in many cases, actually enhance the lives of families and communities.

Summer recreation planners are refocused to provide stimulating and rewarding activities for youth whenever they are out of school, no matter what the time of year. One community with very limited recreational facilities caught the spirit by, as a first step, building an indoor swimming pool. Suddenly swimming, lifesaving and diving classes became important and popular, and water ballet, fitness swimming, and the water festival were oversubscribed activities. The pool became financially self-supporting.

Overcrowding of park and recreational facilities in the summer can be reduced. The feast-or-famine situation faced by many national outdoor locations can be overcome, to the benefit of the environment and the joy of reservation seekers. Camping in California in May can be delightful, as can beach swimming in September and bicycling in October. Winter camping can teach self-survival, ice fishing, and cross county skiing. Jobs can become available for youth in the ski patrols. Ski classes can be offered throughout the winter, as parents purposely plan a January, February, or March vacation. Hiking, hunting, and fishing in the fall can be delightful, as can a vacation in the desert in the spring. Even freeway congestion can be slightly eased by the potential of 25 percent of the families being on vacation each month of the year.

To overcome possible parent and community adjustment problems, successful year-round education districts have developed very extensive lines of communication, not only prior to adoption and through the implementation stage, but continuing as a permanent and ongoing process. Parent opinion surveys are periodically updated. A community YRE planning council meets regularly to determine improvements needed in the existing school-community year-round relations, facilities, and recreational and instructional activities. Most families cannot take three month vacations — one to four weeks at a time is the more common pattern away from work. This, too, will change as three day weeks and longer planned furloughs from the job become common in the future. For now, most parents can find satisfaction in planning three or four seasonal vacation possibilities, including less expensive trips to "undercrowded" tourist areas during the "off-season."

YRE schools can offer a volunteer aid program where both parents and community members become involved in disorienting/orienting/reinforcing/reorienting people to the various aspects of continuous school operation.

Through these volunteers, information is readily available and more easily disseminated throughout the community. They can offer one-to-one help to new families, assist in the adjustment period of those who are very opposed to YRE, provide talks at civic groups and clubs, and establish a two-way line of communication with the school. Parents, community groups, and the schools need constant communication to prevent misconceptions, provide support, and ultimately enhance the opportunities for people.

When year-round calendars have been adopted and then abandoned, the fatal flaw usually occurred in the adoption phase. It was never sold as a philosophy, as a potential for improving communities, schools, learning, and lifestyles. The public was convinced only that it was a way to solve overcrowding and save money. When the crowding or financial conditions were alleviated, the attitude developed that "we do not need it any longer." Patrons saw it as a "stop gap," since the majority of nearby districts continued to operate only conventional calendars. Therefore, they wanted to return to the "regular way," with everyone in school during football season; they never adopted year-round as a community concept of continuous instructional programs and recreational potentials, for they never intended to stay with YRE. It was only a temporary measure to "house students," not a program adopted to benefit learning. The attitude the opponents expressed before the administrator/board decision to revert was: "If YRE is so good, why don't the majority of the districts adopt it as their approach to the school calendar?"

In a few districts, programs started well, but the opposed 30 percent never gave up. They remained adamant that they were going to rid the schools and their lives of this albatross called "year-round school" — not education. They began to concentrate on the election of board members. They worked to get the superintendent to move elsewhere. They put pressure on school principals. They raised concern, gossip, and objections with business associates, elected officials, and the "cocktail circuit." They worked hard on the "town fathers." They became more "politically astute" than the advocates. After a period of time, they gained control of the board and of the superintendency and other posts when supportive administrators accepted new jobs. They convinced the voters that they no longer needed the space and, therefore, should not be "different" from the majority of districts.

It is not hard for the opposition to regain control and eliminate YRE. Normally about 36 percent of eligible voters turn out for school board

elections. A majority of that figure may represent only 20 percent of the community; the other 80 percent either vote for YRE or do not express themselves at the ballot. "Politics," not learning and options, dictate the fate of year-round education in most districts. That has certainly been true in the effort to prevent high schools from converting to YRE. Co-curricular groups holler "foul," and students and parents claim they cannot find jobs or pursue summer leisure activities.

On the positive side, there are districts that have now conducted successful YRE programs for one to two decades. YRE can and does work when implemented correctly with philosophical support from the community. Increasing numbers of students in California have never attended a nine-month elementary or junior high, and in Los Angeles, that fact is now spilling into the high school level. YRE can be rewarding and ongoing where there is commitment.

CURRICULUM

Year-round education, with shorter but more frequent blocks of instructional time in most plans, provides an opportunity for rethinking the school curriculum and learning practices. It can lead toward condensing material into more meaningful study units, or individualized, self-paced, continuous progress sequences. Change and innovation in curriculum can accompany the adoption of YRE. Conversely, conventional requirements and methods can be expressed in the YRE calendar; the only difference then relates to the format of the planned learning blocks in anywhere from three to 18 weeks. Where shorter instructional periods are instituted, the challenge is met in a variety of ways. Most, though, follow a continuous flow pattern to allow the students returning from break to "pick up" their learning activities at the point they left off. The thinking does lend itself to eventual adoption of individualization and life-long continuous learning. For the present, in most elementary schools, the teachers still function within a self-contained class. They and their groups learn together for 45 days (in the 45-15 plan), vacation for 15 days, and then return to the classroom to commence from the spot they "ended" three weeks earlier. The curriculum is designed for these nine-week blocks of attendance. Such a format is relatively easy at elementary and middle school levels and in large high schools.

In small districts where the junior and senior high programs are very

traditional, the 45-15 plan is difficult, if not impractical, in a multi-track situation. It will, however, work in the block YRE arrangement. If the school has single-person departments, certain courses cannot be offered on every track, unless the curriculum is team taught and individualized. If the latter is not acceptable, then the school must carefully work through the scheduling process to provide as many curricular options as possible. A modification has classrooms composed of students from all tracks, who enter and leave every time there is a track change. The curriculum requires complex organization and careful planning. It is enhanced with individualized instructional packets and closer scrutiny of individual — as opposed to group — student progress.

Planning teacher vacations — which must be considered, too — improves with extended contract teaching. The program will work where the teacher understands and is committed to the concept since, ultimately, the load is no greater than in a conventional system. As another way of overcoming perceived problems with one specific calendar, creative leaders have continued to search for and invent the still-growing selection of YRE plans. It is possible to find an alternative pattern in almost any enrollment configuration, K-12.

YRE has been criticized by administrators, boards, parents, and students who prefer very rigid, traditional, group-paced instruction and school organization. They cite that in some small elementary schools, teachers have been forced to accept two grade levels to balance class enrollments. At the secondary level, in small departmentalized programs, administrators have found it difficult to schedule singletons (one class of French III; one class of physics). Teachers have insisted on rigid, but usually indefensible, pre-requisites. This problem, according to advocates, is a matter of philosophy (YRE) versus mechanics (YRS) — of people who do not accept the rationale for continuous learning, alternative teaching styles, and changing family living patterns.

Advocates state that, ironically, the solution to such perceived dilemmas as multi-grade classrooms is to implement what many believe are better educational practices. Those who volunteer for YRE (as opposed to those mandated to teach in the new plan) accept these changes, as they understand and want to create more exciting programs, if possible. The advantages of the non-graded — and team taught — classrooms have been known for years, yet supporters argue that conventionally trained teachers have refused to examine the data. It is a fact that "7th graders" range from

grade 3 to grade 13 on standardized achievement tests. Physiologically there is a documented minimum five to six-year age spread.

Most grade levels have a plus or minus four-year achievement span. Educational change agents would state that there cannot be a fifth grade, or a seventh grade class, when there truly are no such groups. Even chronologically, there is a gap of 12 to 15 months in each grade level. Not all students mature intellectually, socially, or emotionally, or progress physiologically on the same time table, especially in primary grades and during puberty.

Many educators, therefore, believe that outstanding year-round education programs should purposely move toward non-graded learning modes. They should, they believe, move toward individualization, especially at the secondary level where such an approach has long proven to be more effective and is certainly feasible, at least in modified forms, if the methods are properly understood, and if the electronic revolution components are appropriately integrated into the learning system. Such approaches reduce the secondary singleton/doubleton class dilemma. In reality, third year French students are spread from first through fifth year work and could well enroll simply in French, instead of French I or II. Some eighth grade English students write at fifth grade achievement standards, and some at eleventh. Their writing instruction must be individualized. A common theme can keep a group working together as a class in "English," but not "eighth grade English."

Individualizing, non-grading, and teaming — each excellent instructional, philosophical, and mechanical approaches to learning — can be used to resolve the imagined and real dilemmas of combination and specialized classes. They ease the transition into year-round education, if they are accepted by the faculty. If not, adjustments must be made in the format of the conventional classroom.

There are other curriculum-related concerns, arguments, and proposals both pro and con. Advantages cited are less student boredom and fewer retentions, since students cannot fall too far behind if they "make up" missed work by returning during intersessions or joining other tracks. And there is more opportunity to participate in class activities. Special programs can be enhanced or hindered, depending upon the district conditions. Disadvantages can include problems for students transferring to a traditional calendar, difficulty in scheduling resource specialists and the adjustments necessary to arrange contracts for 10-month employees so that no student,

track, or school is denied equal and important services. YRE can enhance curriculum potential; it can also cause great dissension among those not willing to change their teaching patterns and can thus be a disservice to students caught in the conflict. Curriculum and instruction styles must be considered with the same win/win spirit that is essential for the success of any phase of year-round education.

CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMS

Opponents of YRE claim many potential disadvantages in developing strong co-curricular programs. They cite that vacationing students must often volunteer to return to school to participate in music and sports. The successful YRE secondary schools have resolved these issues and developed fine athletic teams and music programs. Students returning to school for additional days may be advantageous, for they are then involved in additional and more continuous contact hours with instructors. It can, though, be a disadvantage for students who have opportunities to earn money working in "summer only" employment industries, unless the experience can be interwoven into their educational program.

Communities have been resolving the work problem by offering rotational employment. Knowing that students are always available, fast food outlets, motels, warehouses, offices, and most all youth-oriented employers hire three students (as in Concept Six) for one position. They each work during their vacation periods to the satisfaction of all. Three students have jobs, not one. The business has a continuous supply of trained help. Regular or alternate student workers can cover for each other during illness or vacations. They can "double up" in times of peak loads or to train for the next year (when the "regulars" become seniors, their "alternates" might be sophomores or juniors.) If it is a company that can absorb new workers upon graduation, those not going immediately to college or other career pursuits often gain full-time employment, and the employer has a flow of experienced job candidates.

The same holds true for volunteer involvements. In traditional-calendar communities, hospitals, nursing homes, and social agencies have an overabundance of student assistants during the summer, then none — or only after school and week-end helpers — for the next nine months. Hospitals love year-round programs, for they can have "year-round candy stripers" — students who volunteer during one or more of their vacation cycles. Patients

receive better care and encouragement, students gain in experience and self-esteem, and the hospital staff can concentrate more on the services requiring special training or medical degrees.

There is no doubt that YRE calendars force major adjustments in the approach to co-curricular activities. But all the high schools nation-wide which have tried YRE — whether they retained it or dropped it — never made the decision based upon the "problems" of planning and scheduling co-curricular events. Football players made sure they were on a track that was in school during football season, if they wanted the traditional option of going to class and playing ball after school. Surprisingly, large numbers of athletes purposely select to be "off track" during their major sport season so that they can concentrate just on the game. They do not worry, then, that their studies, social activities, and fatigue factors may be an overload that might detract from their participation. The ski team in one high school made sure they were off during the winter block so that they could "ski all day," work in the ski patrols, or otherwise enjoy the outdoor winter life.

Music and drama programs have had the same experience. Musical groups can be on a track of most demand for music — the marching band for football half-time shows, the Christmas concert, and the graduation period. The complete band, orchestra, or chorus is not needed every day. Small group and individual rehearsals and practices benefit nicely from rotating schedules. When there is a need for a concentrated full orchestra period of practice, students can either be on that demand track or can return from vacation. They still have two or three other "open" cycles where they are free to relax or work. Athletes in high school often play three or four sports, and then in the summer participate in recreation league programs. Their involvement in athletics is already year-round; playing IS their "vacation."

YRE schools have formed unique approaches to student government. They may retain the traditional format, increasing communication with those off track and sometimes requesting that they return for a meeting. Or they may organize four student councils, one for each track. This latter approach provides four groups of students opportunities for leadership rather than one. All school student council president activities are rotated among the four track leaders, or "all-school" co-presidents can be elected to share leadership when on and off track. Each of these dilemmas is modified in a single track program, but even there, football players must return to school to practice and play if there is a school closure period during the season.

Similar innovative patterns can be developed for drama (four plays

instead of one all-school play, or the students can return during vacations as do the athletes), clubs, science fairs, art festivals, school dances, and other similar interest and social events. Students adjust well; and teachers, coaches and sponsors can be exceptionally creative in determining new patterns of organization to provide for participation for all who want to join in the activities. They need encouragement, support and ideas from an understanding administration — one determined to create success for all phases of learning affected by the year-round education program.

FINANCING YRE

The goals and objectives involved in adopting YRE in terms of educational opportunity, space utilization, closing schools, saving construction costs, expanding special facilities, or offering families a choice of vacations — or a combination of these factors — determine the effects on budgets. Where objectives are primarily to improve educational opportunities and provide choices, costs do not have to increase but, normally, do rise. The amount is not a great additional expense. But there can be upward adjustments in busing; special teacher, clerical, and maintenance contracts; or initial air conditioning installation or other such factors. Those districts selecting YRE on a voluntary basis have determined that the small increase per student is justified when it enhances community activities and learning opportunities.

Programs implemented to save space may initially require greater sums — such as for the installation of air conditioning — but these are offset in the longer run by the reduction in required construction. In rapidly growing districts, millions of dollars are saved by building one fourth fewer schools; avoiding fixed costs for utilities, insurance and maintenance; and eliminating the need for additional administrative and custodial staff for new facilities. Single track plans are neutral in their fiscal impact, when only one school of 20 adopts the program and where, in that situation, busing and special service teachers are either not required during the summer or, if essential, can be rescheduled without additional cost.

Proponents of YRE claim, then, the following financial benefits:

— fewer buildings are required, thus reducing construction and debt services;

— required real estate is reduced, leaving valuable land on the tax rolls or available for parks;

— materials are better utilized, since fewer textbooks, references, and media equipment pieces are needed;

— maintenance and fixed costs are reduced;

— fuel, electricity, insurance, and landscaping are unnecessary for unbuilt facilities;

— intersessions, depending on ADA funding, offer extended teacher contracts;

— vandalism decreases, reducing the money needed for repairs; and

— transportation costs are potentially reduced by creative bus routes, depending upon the calendar plan adopted.

Opponents of YRE cite what they claim are financial drawbacks or additional costs:

— expanding enrollments may still necessitate future construction, at increased labor and materials costs because of inflation — building now, then, saves money;

— administrative and instructional allotments will increase from longer contracts and more paper work;

— transportation costs will be the same or higher;

— state reimbursement may suffer if students vacation off cycle and do not "make up" the lost days;

— maintenance funding may increase, if unions insist on higher pay for night or Saturday/Sunday work;

— air conditioning will increase the budget for equipment purchase and monthly utility bills;

— extending student activities over 12 months will force augmentation of transportation and supervision outlays; and

— the additional wear and tear through continuous use of the building and materials will diminish their life expectancy and offset any savings in capital outlay.

Actual cost comparisons of conventional versus year-round plans have been difficult to compute. The age and original construction of the facilities, the experience and salaries of the teachers, and unique characteristics of the community are all factors to consider. Variables must be held constant: quantity of education (hours of instruction), quality of instruction (service supply levels), general policies (attendance and transportation), and long-term versus transitional effects. Common indices are also necessary. Some districts add the cost of extended contracts and air conditioning to the annual expenditures and budget analysis. Others subtract

the same figures to illustrate savings by not becoming involved in new construction.

As a generalization, it is reasonably safe to state that in rapidly growing districts, YRE does save money. Even if they continue to build, taking into account long-range inflation and enrollment projections, they save by building one-fourth fewer facilities. If enrollment remains stable and if single track programs are implemented, the revenue differences are basically neutral; there could be additional costs if the program is a voluntary multiple track. If a district faces declining enrollment, it can save money by closing one or more schools earlier than possible when the conventional calendar is retained.

Whether the program is mandated district-wide, is voluntary district-wide, is mandatory in only part of a district, is voluntary in only one school, or whether both calendars are offered as school-within-a-school choices, all make a difference in evaluating fiscal figures. At best, YRE saves money; at worst it is revenue neutral, or increases the budget by only a small percentage, when all the data is honestly and objectively evaluated and when the rationale includes all the possible benefits to the student and to the community.

The state Department of Finance report (1987) projecting a 31.4 percent increase in students from 1987 to 1997 is staggering. Some communities will grow more than 40 percent. Statewide, the figures mean another 1.5 million youth in K-12 districts, 45,000 new classrooms, and 10.5 billion more dollars. Year-round education would not eliminate the need for more space, but it could mean that only 30,000 additional classrooms would be required. This immediately reduces the pressure on the state and offers a sensible long-range construction plan.

There are adjustments needed when year-round education is adopted. There is opposition, some of it valid. But adjustments are needed in nine-month calendars too. And there is opposition to the conventional calendar, much of which is also valid. If a district adopts YRE, it must be prepared to be flexible, adaptable, humane, committed, and supportive, as efforts move forward to create new learning systems, meet massive enrollment increases, and offer options for people.

AMONG SUPPORT PERSONNEL

Non-certificated employees on the conventional calendar have two to

three months over the summer to complete the school business of one year and then prepare for the next. A year-round calendar eliminates this longer preparation period. Therefore, it is essential that the great majority of classified employees comprehend, and become as supportive as possible of, the new calendar. They should be included in the planning from the first day. These employees can make a tremendous contribution to the transition — the difference between success and failure.

If the classified staff are bitter about their treatment and the resulting changes in their lifestyles, work schedules, and contracts, they will breed ill will in the community. If they understand the reasons for the change, make it cheerfully, and cooperate to the fullest, implementation of the revised formats is relatively smooth. In multi-track YRE plans, most not already on 12-month contracts will need to extend their work year. Cleaning may have to be done on week-ends. Multiple enrollment records must be kept. Buses must roll year-round. Food must be served 12 months. And books and supplies must be purchased and delivered continuously. Business managers, clerks, custodians, gardners, cooks, bus drivers, and secretaries are among those who must change their routines.

Maintenance personnel are especially affected. They cannot wait until the summer to scrub, paint, repair, and remodel. Rooms must be cleaned, painted, repaired, or added to while students are in session (creating a potential additional hazard for environmentally sensitive staff and youth). Shifting to some night and week-end work, quickly finishing daytime tasks, and adding safety precautions are all part of the picture. In a single track program, additional classified staff are not needed. In a multiple track, more custodians may need to be hired. But the cost is offset by housing more students, avoiding construction costs, and eliminating the expense of employing an entire staff for the new facility which would otherwise be required.

Most bus drivers have not been on contract to drive during the summer months, and buses are often overhauled or given special maintenance during this period of the conventional calendar. Food service personnel are accustomed to school-free summers, too. New pieces of kitchen equipment are installed or repairs to the ovens are often made during the down time from June 15 to August 15. In YRE the kitchen area will be continuously utilized. Registration is handled relatively easily over the summer in a nine-month calendar; but, in YRE, there is ongoing registration. The same is true for student records; they must be updated weekly and monthly.

The kindergarten can no longer be remodeled during the summer, nor can the gymnasium be painted, except in the single-track YRE calendar where everyone is on vacation at the same time. Even then, the time frame is limited. Multi-track calendars allow no great luxury of vacancies except over special holidays. The books for the next school year must arrive in June — to be ready for the new cycle in July — at the same time old books are being collected to close out the preceding year. Supplies cannot arrive over the summer and be distributed at a leisurely pace. The gardener must change the summer schedules for watering the playing fields.

Non-certificated personnel require equal treatment as their schedules and contracts are changed for they need to be supportive. Classified employees have always been important but have seldom received the recognition they deserve for their efforts. In year-round education, their support and cooperation is not only important, it is essential; they must be involved and consulted. They are "extra-special" people in planning and implementing a continuous calendar.

CHAPTER 7

EFFECTS ON STUDENTS

The effects of educational innovations on the lives of students have been difficult to measure systematically. A comprehensive effort creates a complicated methodological problem, for there are such a vast number of variables in a school system. Even when student gains or losses can be documented from one year to the next, it is usually not possible to point to one single variable, such as year-round education, as the major cause of the positive or negative change. All other independent variables must be held constant, which is most difficult when using the public schools as a laboratory. It is not surprising that there is little concrete, positive proof supporting or condemning YRE.

Involved educators have tried to measure differences, but the total effect is still unknown. There is documentation that students are not harmed by participating in YRE, when contrasted with the conventional calendar and measured by the traditional evaluation components: test scores, absences, illness, graduation rates, college entrance, employment, reading ability, self-image and other similar factors. There are some indications of positive results, especially in test scores of those who fall below the 50th percentile. But before strong claims can be made, there is still need for firm evidence. By the same analysis, there is no proof — not even any strong indication — that any particular benefit derives from the nine-month calendar. The conventional September to June pattern has been accepted without documented research. There is no laboratory evidence to support

any particular value gained by closing schools during the three warm months of summer. It is simply a tradition born of a now much diminished agrarian society.

Measurement efforts to connect YRE with outcomes within the affective domain have been most often achieved through the use of locally designed questionnaires relying on self-reports by students or observations by the teachers and parents. This method of data collection is open to contamination. There have been efforts to measure the affective impact of YRE by two additional methods — recording affective changes, where year-round students are both the control and experimental groups, and using traditional calendar students as the control to compare them against YRE calendar youth as the experimental group. Since neither approach has been able to isolate all the variables, the results of such studies cannot be considered entirely valid.

One early effort to ascertain information in the affective domain was developed and administered by the La Mesa-Spring Valley School District. It was distributed to principals, teachers, students (grades 3-8), parents, classified staff, and community representatives. The composite findings from the six groups indicated that 84 percent of the students enjoyed having several short vacations, 85 percent exhibited a greater interest in the school program, and 78 percent enjoyed intersessions more than summer school.

The results of similar studies in other districts are generally supportive of YRE. Two surveys of students who had previously been enrolled in conventional calendar schools resulted in 53 percent and 54 percent preferring YRE, 28 percent in each voting for the traditional calendar, and 19 percent in one and 18 percent in the other having no opinion. One typical survey of teachers indicated they felt that 61 percent of their students liked YRE; 2 percent did not like it; and 37 percent had no strong opinion either way. Chula Vista parents in YRE schools felt that 69 percent of their children liked YRE, while 18 percent disliked it, and 13 percent had no preference. A doctoral dissertation at the University of Southern California by Robert Vouga determined that, of parents from 20 randomly polled year-round schools in five Southern California counties, 83 percent preferred the YRE calendar, 13 percent preferred the conventional calendar, and 2 percent remained undecided.

A number of "homemade" district surveys have reported that elementary YRE students rate themselves higher in being happy with school, taking part in more class discussions, joining in more class activities, and

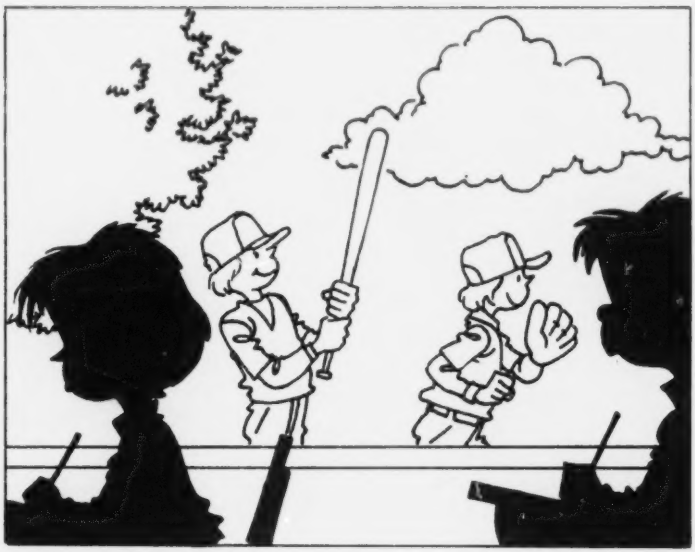
liking their teachers. Secondary YRE students in one survey rated themselves higher in believing that teachers liked them, that they were doing good work in school, that they were getting better grades, that they liked school, and that they had stronger school pride. Such results can be the "halo effect" that often accompanies the implementation of successful change or the excitement created by new approaches; it can wear off in later years.

Conventional calendar schools can cite similar findings. None of these homemade district surveys can be used to support OR refute YRE since they are certainly not "scientific." They do indicate that, where accepted by the parents and teachers, YRE can be viewed by the community with a positive rather than negative attitude. The study by Vouga was well done. It can be accepted with credence as a measure of parent views in the mid-70s. Whether those views remain the same could be the topic of another dissertation.

Perhaps the most comprehensive 80s era review of the evaluations of the various aspects of year-round education was conducted by Bonnie Kuner-Roth. Her analysis of the literature included academic achievement, attendance and achievement, sex differences, program designs, economics, a comparison of academic achievement of students in YRE and conventional schools, major summary studies, a historical review, a listing of important references, and perceptions of teachers, students, and parents. Though the summaries did indicate some negative aspects of YRE and some feelings of opposition from a segment of society, overall, the clear majority of findings either were neutral as to the effect of and support for YRE or definitely favored the continuous year approach. Kuner-Roth's report, a doctoral dissertation at Temple University, concluded that, taken as a whole, there were more reasons to support YRE than to oppose the concept.

In California, the San Diego County Office of Education, has, on several occasions, summarized the results of surveys and comparisons of YRE schools in that area of the state. They have published a major document titled YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION RESOURCE GUIDEBOOK, which includes a section on evaluation, as well as planning, instructional, implementational, operational, and scheduling aspects. Generally their report, too, is favorable toward YRE.

During the 80s in California, the most extensive and reliable cost analysis and academic achievement data have been compiled at the K-8 level by the Oxnard School District. The carefully gathered information is



portrayed in two annual documents: "A Cost Analysis of Year-round Education in the Oxnard School District;" and "Year-round Education and Academic Achievement in the Oxnard School District." Of importance in Oxnard is the comparison they were able to establish between students from the same socio-economic and academic achievement levels participating in both YRE and traditional calendar plans.

In 1987, the California State Department of Education completed "Year-round Education: Year-round Opportunities — A Study of Year-round Education in California." It was compiled from two surveys — one sent to YRE district offices and one sent to individual YRE schools — through visits to several YRE districts, and by extensive interviews with acknowledged leaders in the "new calendar" movement. As with previous studies, it does not conclusively prove "for" or "against" year-round education. However, the overall summary is neutral or favorable. Though some "negatives" are described, they are neither insurmountable nor are they of sufficient magnitude to discourage the implementation of the concept.

The report does contain some statements open to interpretation. At first glance, it would seem that YRE students score lower on tests than students in conventional schools. Closer observation verifies that 79 percent of the YRE enrollments are from minority student populations and predominately from situations where students score low on tests whether they are in conventional or YRE calendars. This high percentage was created by the fact that the major overcrowded districts in California in the mid-eighties were the ones with large numbers of traditionally low-achieving groups of students. In favor of YRE, as supported by the Oxnard and Los Angeles school level results, similarly low-achieving students improved their test scores at a more rapid pace than those remaining in conventional calendar programs. It is to be remembered that YRE was first implemented in academically average or above average school districts; low test scores are a recent pattern.

The state report is, on the whole, worth careful analysis. It contributes to the consideration and implementation of continuous learning calendars. The topics discussed and the findings presented are a major asset for school administrators as they prepare to lead their staffs (both certificated and classified), students, and parents into an exploration and possible adoption of year-round programs. However, there are enough flaws in the report to reinforce the contention that, at this stage of the development of educational evaluation and research, the many YRE "studies" cannot be cited with 100 percent assurance that the results, whether positive or negative toward the concept, are entirely valid. A few examples may illustrate this caution.

The department's study implies that each track should contain at least one class at each grade level to ensure educational quality (p.44). It further states that, for an effective four-track program, between 700-800 students are required. As a result of such interpretations, the study questions the introduction of YRE in small schools. None of these quality and size statements, if accepted at face value, are valid. Goodlad and Anderson, in "The Non-Graded Elementary School" (1959), documented the fallacy of such thinking. Combined classes are no excuse for poor maintenance of high-quality education; they are an asset in correctly implemented YRE programs.

The study (p.40) also begs the question in summarizing the background characteristics of YRE students. It states that year-round schools serve lower socioeconomic communities, a higher proportion of minority youth, and twice as many limited English speaking pupils. The wording can be

misinterpreted to assume that this is the purpose of YRE. It does not clearly explain that this phenomena has nothing to do with the concept of YRE and is only an existing, not permanent, condition. More clarification is needed, too, that the finding of lower test scores for students in large urban districts, and their less-than-predicted assessment results, again are community factors, not at all attributable to year-round education. There is not enough examination of the strong test scores of single track YRE schools. The data may be correct, but the interpretation, or lack of it, is suspect, validating the need to limit statements about the effect of YRE on student performance.

The study fails to cite that the rebirth of YRE was not intended initially to raise academic growth. It was begun in some districts to solve a space problem and in others to offer families choices — to be humane enough to allow construction workers in snowy climates to vacation in January and February. The heavy state Department of Education focus on cognitive achievement may not be valid, especially in those districts with already acknowledged space and learning problems. The solution to the latter is appropriate curriculum and instruction. Memory tests of percentages, decimals, historical dates and events, parts of the body, and adverb and adjective recognition might not relate to a change in the school calendar.

The problem of implementing YRE in smaller high schools was seen as further compounding what was perceived as a requirement for a sufficient number of students. No mention was made of the many scheduling conflicts in traditional high school calendars. Singletons and doubletons cause frustrations in nine month programs. The conventional secondary administrator states that the schedule has no conflicts, yet it may be impossible to take French IV, chorus, band, and physics in the senior year, when they are all singletons scheduled first period. In the September to June calendar, small high schools cannot offer every subject every year. YRE should not be made the scapegoat for an age-old curriculum problem. There are 692 secondary schools in California with an enrollment under 400, and another 553 under 800. Should these 1,245 be closed? They all follow nine month schedules.

The effort to better utilize school facilities perhaps should have been more of the focus of evaluation. If over half the districts indicated space was the pressing concern, then more analysis was needed to determine if they met their objective and if YRE truly helped their community. Can schools continue to be used only one-fourth of the day, half the days of the year, and three-fourths of the months? Perhaps the study should have included the

problem of under utilization of existing facilities, as well as trying to focus on possible academic achievement.

The staffing analysis (p.69) presents data that "year-round program staff members are younger, less experienced, and less educationally advanced than their statewide counterparts," and "female, Hispanic, and black staff members are more common." This, again, has nothing to do with the concept of YRE or the calendar change. Such data in a "study" only clouds the discussion unless a more complete analysis of these factors — if, indeed, they are factors — is included in the document.

Commenting on the potential excessive wear on a building without presenting both views can be misleading in any "study" on YRE. The business community plans its facilities for 12 months' use, along with the necessary related maintenance. Life expectancy of a plant is based upon continuous operation. Hospitals are open 365 days a year, Sears and Roebuck is open in most cities seven days a week, or most of 360-365 days. Reporting a perceived problem without complete analysis is a characteristic of many of the efforts to evaluate the concept of year-round education. Would parents vote to close hospitals (also helping institutions) for three months in the summer?

The state report cited problems with timely receipt of apportionments, textbooks, and project funding, and difficulties arranging schoolwide testing dates. The publication failed to note that these were not inherent in YRE but were caused by people directing an antiquated system with no provision for alternative approaches and that the solution was not to abandon YRE but to change the system to address the need for multiple options and diversified disbursement periods.

The same is true where one administrator suggests that enrollments of 625 to 1,000 in elementary schools are necessary to create YRE programs without combination classes. YRE has been successful as a school-within-a-school multi-track with only 100 students. The dilemma is not caused by year-round, but by insisting on a questionable practice — now called the "graded" school — instituted in 1847 to house students. At the secondary level, failure to individualize advanced classes has created the "problem," not YRE. Regardless of personal opinions regarding such practices, "studies" which do not address all facets of concern and present all possible solutions may be disadvantageous. Reporting just on what exists, as opposed to what "could be," may not be helpful unless the study is attempting a pure "laboratory" research project.

Stating in the report that "YRE extracts a brutal toll on administrators" (p.80) creates an alarm not tempered by complete discussion. A 12 month job as principal is no more difficult than a year-round executive role in any major business. If the toll is that great, then, as the publication suggests, administrative assistance may be necessary. Hard work over 12 months is not the "fault" of YRE, anymore than it is for any other strenuous, demanding job in another profession. If administrators, like doctors, need Wednesday afternoon off, then the public should be made aware of the burdens that cry for relief, and through understanding, have that relief built into the contract.

Intersession enrollment was reported as light. Once again, historical insight is important to properly digest the figures; and this information was omitted from the study. Before Proposition 13, numerous schools reported 50-75 percent intersession attendance, not 5 to 15 percent. The exciting programs that were once the envy of the country were the victim of the summer school funding demise. The extra space was found in community facilities; low income students were fed and instructed 12 months in more than one school. Besides babysitting and meals, the programs excelled in fun activities, in art, music, and sports, in special studies as in oceanography at the beach and environment in the mountains, and a more leisurely but substantial approach to reading and math.

Air conditioning need is not the fault of YRE either. It is hot in California in May and September. Schools need climate control even in nine month settings. Meanwhile, schools can open from 7 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in the summer. The focus on mechanical problems should take a back seat in convincing the community to reconsider its views on budgeting for different cooling and heating systems.

There are many more incomplete pictures in the state department report. This is not a major criticism. But these items illustrate how all sides of each issue or complaint or praise for a purported innovation in education must be carefully examined after every aspect of the change being considered is honestly and objectively evaluated and data gathered. Then a decision based on reason rather than emotion can be rendered. Most year-round education studies contain errors of omission, regardless of whether they support or reject the concept.

Earlier efforts to report on the cognitive effects of YRE were subject to the same problems faced by the affective domain surveys, the state Department of Education study, and Oxnard's and other districts' internal

assessments. All displayed methodological weaknesses. Further, in either traditional or YRE calendar approaches, little effort has been made to determine the impact, if any, in the psychomotor domain. Too many of the evaluation attempts have utilized only survey questionnaires or traditional achievement testing. Changes in curriculum, which have often accompanied YRE, have not been isolated in the measurements.

As many evaluators have indicated, standardized tests are not necessarily appropriate to assess the impact of an instructional program. Robert Stake of the University of Illinois, a well recognized evaluation specialist, has commented that discriminability among students is important for instruction and guidance. But for the development and selection of curricula, it is essential; tests must discriminate specific factors. He stated: "I am dismayed by my colleagues who believe that standardized achievement tests can be used to satisfy the needs of the curriculum evaluator."

Keeping in mind, then, all such weaknesses, one typical opinion survey related to cognitive growth indicated that 26 percent of the teachers felt that the pupils were learning more; 2 percent felt they were learning less; 37 percent felt they were learning the same; and 35 percent believed that there was insufficient information to decide. An early study in San Diego City Schools did try to control many of the known variables. Comparisons were made among 52 subgroupings. The trend of differences favored students in year-round programs for two years, but the results were not judged to be sufficient to constitute a definite pattern of superiority. Similar findings occurred in the La Mesa-Spring Valley District where the evaluation rested almost solely on performance on standardized tests. The outcomes revealed no dramatically superior scholastic achievement by pupils in year-round schools, but it was clear that YRE had no adverse effects upon the achievement levels of the enrolled students. Dozens of other such efforts could be cited.

Though evaluation studies in general are inconclusive, there is much evidence to validate the claim that large numbers of people support and believe in YRE, that it has some positive benefits, that there are no overall adverse effects, and that negative aspects can be overcome with committment and creativity, and, if needed, a change in attitude. Debates over whether test scores are higher in YRE or conventional schools are surprising. Students often have the same caliber teachers, the same style classroom, the same textbooks, the same curriculum guides, the same total

instructional days and come from the same socio-economic groups. Why would shifting the calendar dates, in these circumstances, be expected to make much difference in test results?

Evaluation of any effects of YRE on students still needs further research and development. Consideration of student variables must go beyond those identified in the existing affective, cognitive, and psychomotor measures. More valid instruments are necessary to control the methodologies used in measuring a single component of a school. For now, though, conclusive evidence favoring any calendar — traditional or YRE — is not available. The current data can be interpreted, in a general sense, to say that YRE calendars are as good as, if not better than, the conventional September-to-June, nine month attendance pattern. As with medical research into cancer, AIDS, muscular dystrophy, and environmental illness, among others, hopefully answers to more of the dilemmas in both medicine and education will be available prior to the arrival of the 21st century.

CHAPTER 8

MECHANICS AND YRE DISTRICTS

Year-round education is only one of many proposed, possible, or productive "innovations" that can be considered by districts. By itself, it is not that significant, except to alleviate overcrowding in population swollen schools. Viewed as part of the potential coming changes in education, it can be a major stepping stone toward future implementation of a long-heralded, continuous, life-long-learning system designed for sometime in the coming century.

During the projected transition through the early 90s, current concepts of YRE can be molded to fit the varied needs of most communities. It is especially viable, politically, when offered on a voluntary basis. Financially it can be a temporary lifesaver for space squeezed school administrators. Knowing that it does have both positive and negative aspects, as does the nine month calendar, YRE has proven to be worthy of discussion in every school in California.

When there is a need for detailed cook-book approaches to the mechanics of implementation, scheduling, budget, and contracts — the "nuts and bolts" faced by all administrators — the best advice is not to read but to visit, then think, and next create. With so many programs currently available in California, rather than "reinventing the wheel," "beginning" districts considering the concept — or "veteran" YRE districts desiring to rethink their approaches — should establish a visitation plan. School and community leaders can spend time in a successful YRE program learning the

"how-to-do-it" or "how-it-is-done-here" aspects of the change; a "recipe" can be created, if needed.

A team from the considering community should examine several calendars, such as the Concept Six, 45-15, 60-20, continuous year, quarter, and quinmester plans, and others that may appeal on paper. The selection should then be narrowed to the two or three most workable for the school being considered for YRE. When the calendar choice is determined, those responsible for implementation should again visit schools already using the same one, to learn, in depth, the:

— mechanics of scheduling;
— public relations and community information formats;
— maintenance and bus schedule adjustments;
— budget realignments;
— textbook and supply purchasing deadlines;
— intersession successes;
— tracking methods;
— storage techniques and room sharing solutions;
— orientation of transfer families;
— special teacher assignments;
— union negotiations;
— appeal board organization to approve requests for special calendar consideration (a mechanism for personalizing, should a student or teacher really need three months off in a mandated YRE district);
— school-within-a-school or other alternative choice configurations;
— adjustments for one school on a single track;
— community agency and organization contacts;
— legal requirements, and
— necessary board and administrator decisions.

Upon returning home, the team can involve those individuals and groups needed to adjust the methods of the "other district" to fit the existing and potential future conditions in the adopting community. Creativity, commitment, philosophy, and attitude are, again, the four keys to success along with imagineering — a mixture of inventing and engineering. When the method used elsewhere seems to have weaknesses, the new YRE program should create better approaches; the concept yet needs the vision of great inventors.

Each year the list of state and national YRE districts, programs, calendars, levels, and leaders needs updating, as every July there are

additions, subtractions, revisions, changes, and modifications. Those listed below were current for 1987-88. Many of these communities will still be conducting YRE programs in the years ahead. The schools that are operational in a given year do provide a beginning for the district seeking help with mechanics. At the implementation stage, YRE teachers should talk to potential YRE teachers, maintenance YRE veterans to new maintenance leaders, administrators to administrators, business managers to business managers, food service supervisors to food service supervisors, parents to parents, board members to board members. In other words, one-to-one and small group discussions with peers to learn of the advantages of YRE, the mechanical "nuts and bolts," and the changes and effects on school, family, and community lifestyles are by far the best ways to ascertain the "all you ever wanted to know information" about year-round education. Visitations to several of the following communities are essential steps in the process of successful implementation of YRE.

District	Location	Began	Calendars
Apple Valley Unif.	Apple Valley	1980	60-20 multi-track
Cajon Valley Elem.	El Cajon	1973	45-15 single-track
Capistrano Unif.	San Juan Capistrano	1979	45-15 single-track
Chula Vista Elem.	Chula Vista	1971	45-15 single-track
Cotati-Rohnert Unif.	Cotati	1973	45-15 single-track
Encinitas Elem.	Encinitas	1974	45-15 single-track 45-15 multi-track dual (YRE + T)
Fairfield-Suisun Unif.	Fairfield	1973	45-15 multi-track 45-15 single-track Dual (YRE + T)
Fontana Unif.	Fontana	1984	45-15 multi-track
Fountain Valley Elem.	Fountain Valley	1973	45-15 single-track
Franklin-McKinley Elem.	San Jose	1986	45-15 multi-track
Fresno Unif.	Fresno	1975	Concept Six 60-20 multi-track 45-15 single-track Dual (YRE + T)

Garvey Elem.	Rosemead	1985	45-15 multi-track
Gilroy Unif.	Gilroy	1985	60-20 multi-track
Hacienda-LaPuente	LaPuente	1986	Continuous all year
Hayward Unif.	Hayward	1968	45-15 single-track
Hesperia Unif.	Hesperia	1975	45-15 multi-track
Irvine Unif.	Irvine	1972	45-15 single-track
LaMesa-Spring Valley Elem.	LaMesa	1971	45-15 single-track 45-15 multi-track
Lennox Elem.	Inglewood	1983	60-20 multi-track
Lodi Unif.	Lodi	1985	90-30 multi-track
Los Angeles Unif.	Los Angeles	1974	Concept Six multi-tr 90-30 multi-track 60-20 multi-track 45-15 multi-track Continuous
Los Banos Unif.	Los Banos	1986	45-15 single-track
Madera Elem.	Madera	1986	60-20 multi-track
Modesto Elem.	Modesto	1977	45-15 single-track
Montebello Unif.	Montebello	1980	45-15 multi-track 45-15 single-track
Monterey Unif.	Monterey	1973	45-15 single-track
National Elem.	National City	1984	45-15 single-track
Nevada Union High Dist.	Grass Valley	1986	Independent Study
Norwalk-LaMirada Unif.	Norwalk	1985	45-15 modified
Oakland Unif.	Oakland	1973	45-15 multi-track 60-20 multi-track
Orange Unif.	Orange	1975	45-15 single-track
Oxnard Elem.	Oxnard	1976	60-20 multi-track Dual (YRE + T)
Pajaro Valley Unif.	Watsonville	1972	Modified Trad
Petaluma Unif.	Petaluma	1973	45-15 single-track
Rialto Unif.	Rialto	1981	60-20 multi-track 45-15 multi-track
Richmond Unif.	Richmond	1984	45-15 single-track
San Bernardino Unif.	San Bernardino	1975	45-15 single track

San Diego Unif.	San Diego	1972	45-15 single-track 45-15 multi-track Dual (YRE + T)
San Francisco Unif.	San Francisco	1976	Flexible all year
San Juan Unif.	Carmichael	1974	45-15 multi-track Flexible all year
San Luis Coastal Unif.	San Luis Obispo	1984	45-15 single track
Santa Ana Unif.	Santa Ana	1980	45-15 single-track 45-15 multi-track 60-20 multi-track
Santa Maria Elem.	Santa Maria	1987	60-20 multi-track
Saugus Elem.	Saugus	1975	45-15 single-track Dual (YRE + T)
Simi Valley Unif.	Simi Valley	1974	25-2 single-track
South Bay Elem.	Imperial Beach	1975	45-15 single-track
Sweetwater Union H S	Chula Vista	1986	Independent Study
Vallejo Unif.	Vallejo	1973	45-15 multi-track 45-15 single-track 50-10 single-track
Ventura Unif.	Ventura	1976	45-15 single-track
Visalia Unif.	Visalia	1986	45-15 multi-track
Vista Unif.	Vista	1981	Dual (YRE + T)

There are a number of districts in other states that offer year-round education. A few are listed here to illustrate the national picture. Several of these districts would be worth visiting, too, if time and funding permit. At a minimum, they can be contacted by mail or phone to provide additional insight, materials, schedules, or "recipes" as to how they succeeded in overcoming a particular problem. Among issues, for example, at the secondary level would be techniques for solving co-curricular activities scheduling, arranging for singletons and doubletons in the master schedule or on a given track, or methods of individualizing small advanced or combination classes. Most districts throughout the United States have been more than willing to assist others with the implementation of year-round education.

District	YRE Plan	Grade Level
COLORADO		
Cherry Creek School District 4700 S. Yosemite Englewood, CO 80111	45-15	(K-8)
FLORIDA		
Palm Beach County Schools P.O. Box 24690 West Palm Beach, FL 33416	Quinmester	(10-12)
IDAHO		
Preston School District 120 E. 2nd St. South Preston, ID 83263	45-15	(K-6)
MICHIGAN		
Huron Valley Schools 2390 Milford Road Milford, MI 48042	45-15	(K-6)
MISSOURI		
Francis Howell School District Rt. 2 St. Charles, MO 63301	45-15	(K-6)
NEVADA		
Clark County School District 28329 E. Flamingo Rd. Las Vegas, NV 89121	45-15	(K-6)
Washoe County School District 425 E. 9th St. Reno, NV 89502	45-15	(K-8)
TEXAS		
Houston Independent School District 3830 Richmond Ave. Houston, TX 77027	60-20	(K-6)
UTAH		
Jordan School District 9361 S. 400 East Sandy, Utah 84070 45-15	60-15	(K-6)
Provo City School District 280 W. 940 North Provo, UT 84601	45-15	(K-6)

Alpine School District 50 N. Center St. American Fork, UT 84003	60-15 (Orchard Plan)	(K-6)
VIRGINIA		
Buena Vista School District 2039 Sycamore Ave. Buena Vista, Virginia 24416	4-quarter	(9-12)
NEW JERSEY		
Tenafly Public Schools Tenafly High School Tenafly, NJ 07670	Summer Semester	(9-12)

CHAPTER 9

LAWS AND POPULATIONS

In 1968, when the Hayward Unified School District pioneered the 50-15, 200 day YRE plan, and in 1971, when the La Mesa-Spring Valley and Chula Vista Elementary Districts implemented the 45-15, 175-day YRE plan, these communities had to seek special permission from the Legislature. Through 1971, YRE was "against the law" in California, for apportionments were based on ADA from September to June and on a separate summer school formula.

From 1971 to 1974, the Legislature eliminated all obstacles to year-round education. In fact, from 1975 to 1977, prior to the adoption of Proposition 13, the Legislature granted up to $25,000 for startup costs for any district implementing YRE. The lawmakers, in general, became very supportive of even mandating YRE when overcrowding was a major factor and of completely eliminating any barrier preventing the adoption of YRE on a voluntary basis.

During the past decade, continuing adjustments have been made in the legislation affecting YRE. In 1987, further revisions were passed relating to the concept of changing school calendars. Almost every year, new YRE considerations are proposed. In the same vein, there are YRE education code sections that have been eliminated, or need elimination, for they have now expired or are obsolete.

It is essential that each district involved in YRE monitor the legislation and continually update its binder on YRE regulations. For new or

considering districts, rather than search the Education Code books, assistance can again be sought while visiting existing YRE districts. They usually have the ongoing laws available and normally are knowledgeable about proposed new regulations. Districts planning YRE calendars must ensure that they have gathered the very latest legislation before making final YRE determinations. There are always a number of requirements, permissions, or exemptions that should be discussed related to the current status of the California Education Code.

In the early adoption years of YRE, the legislative intent of the first experimental permission was clear. The general provisions sections stated, in part: "The Legislature is especially concerned and aware of the mounting costs of acquisition and construction of school sites and facilities, and is, therefore, desirous of determining whether those burdens fiscal may be reduced by increased utilization of existing plants and facilities."

"The Legislature is also interested in determining whether the replacement of the present system of lengthy summer vacations with shorter quarterly vacation periods will result in diminition of student vacation 'learning loss'... and the efficacy of such programs in accelerating the completion of the course of instruction by the pupils.... This chapter shall be liberally construed to permit the accomplishments of these ends and to facilitate the complete evaluation of the school operations to enable the Legislature to determine what administrative, social, and other problems are presented."

Over the early years, as the experimental legislation was amended to permit ongoing continuous year programs, specifics were stated in some detail. The academic year was broadened to 12 months to establish it without reference to the school year, as defined in Section 37200, though classes were to be conducted for no fewer than 175 nor more than 200 days (37420). If a neighborhood school became year-round, 37421 allowed governing boards to permit transfers of students to non-year round schools available in the district. 37422 required the YRE instructional program to provide, at least, the overall equivalent in instruction to the conventional K-12 offerings. Separate salary schedules were required in 37423 if teachers taught for a greater number of days than in the traditional calendar.

Schools operating year-round were entitled to the same, but not more, support, as those which followed the conventional calendar (37430.) 37431, 432, and 433 covered allowances and disbursements. A key clause in 433 permitted disbursement of funds at times other than specified in 41330, but

the total amount could be no more than would be gained through the regular calendar.

Those considering YRE should not be confused by expired legislation appearing in the occasionally revised education codes. Currently 37500, 01, 02, 03, 10, 12, 13, and 20 all relate to the exciting Hayward 200-day-year program in existence from 1968 to 1975. When the financial support for 200 days was not renewed by the Legislature, Hayward reverted the Park School plan to a 45-15, single track program. The same expiration circumstance relates to 37644, which expired in 1979, but which in 1987 still appeared in that section of the education code.

37610 through 37620 are yet important, for they outline the criteria for establishing a YRE program. If the implementation is to be voluntary, all that is required is to notify the state superintendent of public instruction. If it is to be mandated, a district must publish not later than November 1st, at least once in each of three successive weeks, its intent to operate a continuous program. After such notice to create a condition in such a manner to require any pupil to enroll in a continuous school program, a petition signed by 25 percent of the electors of a district may be presented to the county superintendent by December 10th of the same year, requesting that the district not create a mandated YRE program. If it is valid, this request becomes a demand for an election which may be consolidated with the next district-wide election held 80 days or more after the petition is filed. If no petition is presented, the district may proceed with implementation. If a vote is required, the results of the yes or no response must first be determined. Even if the vote is no, the district may proceed on a voluntary basis; it just cannot mandate the program.

Before actually implementing any year-round calendar, state regulations require that at least one public meeting be held for those involved — certificated and classified employees, parents, and the community at large.

Students of the same family must be placed in the same group (if multi-tracking is adopted), unless a student is enrolled in a special education program or the parents request placement of family members on separate tracks. Teaching sessions and vacation periods must be on a rotating basis; holidays must be honored.

The most recent legislative efforts have focused on financial incentives to encourage overcrowded districts to consider YRE before asking for more funds for construction of new school facilities. AB 1650 (1987), effective July 1, 1989, places districts lower on the priority list for receiving state

funds for new school construction if they have not already implemented a multi-track, space-saving calendar. Currently, if a community adopts YRE to alleviate overcrowding, that district is eligible to receive incentive money for each student enrolled over the normally accepted standard capacity for the schools in the district, but equal to only a percentage of the amount it would cost the state to buy a site and construct a school. Money is also available for assistance with air conditioning for schools that are converted to YRE to prevent, or to require less, construction or financial burden for any district. "A Study of Year-Round Education in California," the state Department of Education report, contains an excellent review of the incentives and possible financial expenditures or savings. Further, most business offices or superintendents of existing YRE districts can provide the information and the latest additions to the education code.

It is apparent, then, that year-round education has legislative support. If districts find problems with existing regulations, proposals should be developed for sponsorship by a supportive legislator. For the better part of the past two decades, the Legislature has been very good to those interested in pursuing the concept of continuous-ye. education.

When considering YRE and the future of California, demographics must be a major part of the discussion. The state will pass the 30 million mark in the 90s, and school enrollments will continue to grow. Expansion into the "open spaces" near Lancaster and Palmdale, Santa Maria, Modesto, Stockton, Sacramento, and other such potential combination land/industry/population growth areas will create expansion cities, new "Los Angeles" situations, and renewed demands for school facilities. Related to this pattern is the fact that many older buildings are nearing obsolescence or need major repairs, maintenance, remodeling or additions.

Beyond potential learning and lifestyle advantages, there are two good reasons for considering YRE in these growth — or at the other extreme — deteriorating enrollment or facility situations. YRE will slow building rates, so that, if there is a future dip in enrollment in a given district, there will not be an excess of school buildings — as South Bay and San Mateo County communities experienced when, 10 years after constructing beautiful new facilities, they were faced with closing the site. The price of housing had risen, and young families with children could no longer afford to purchase homes there.

The continuing immigration and minority ethnic population increases are creating skewed conditions in the state as well. Some districts are

overwhelmed with students from non-Anglo populations, while other communities face declining but all-Anglo enrollments. YRE should not be a pawn in the ethnic changes in California. It must be remembered that YRE was developed in predominately Anglo, suburban or rural communities. In 1976, YRE population totals were still showing the majority to be Anglo and often from moderate to affluent socio-economic backgrounds. With the tremendous influx in one decade of increasing numbers of minority youth, and where these families were often economically strapped and joined together in ethnic enclaves, overcrowding specific districts, YRE enrollments dramatically shifted to non-Anglo majorities.

The Legislature is cognizant of these factors. As YRE is considered for the future, there must be an interrelationship of curriculum, lifestyle, ethnicity, space, affective, and cognitive community factors. California, as just one illustration, is faced with the potential of San-San (a megalopolis from San Francisco to San Diego), for 80 percent of the population resides within 25 miles of the ocean. As growth patterns move inland, as the population continues to increase, and as prices in San-San become prohibitive — as the remaining space there evaporates — educators must give more attention to the long range changes which will be necessary in the schools and school calendars in California.

CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY

For years ACSA members have provided leadership in improving educational opportunities for youth, parents, and community members. Looking only at the recent past, ACSA members have piloted such proposals as non-graded schools, flexible scheduling, mini-courses, team teaching, new marking systems, individualized learning, television teaching, computer assisted instruction, and curriculum packages, among others.

More recently they have pushed effective schools research, core curriculum, higher test scores, sterner discipline, longer school years, homework, school test profiles, and enrollment in rigorous academic courses. In between, they have sandwiched support for gifted and talented programs, pre-schools, individual special education programs, technology in careers and employment, and targeted efforts for limited English speaking, minority, and economically disadvantaged youth.

All these have a role. Unfortunately, too often they have followed the ebb and flow of the tide of support, political whims, minimal votes (3-2, with 2 absent), and fads of their communities. Decisions to add, drop, or modify programs have not always been based upon serious research and evaluation, alternative preferences, long-term projections, growth and development knowledge, lifestyle and learning considerations and a complete understanding of the total philosophy behind the proposal. Money, facilities, school board elections, and political expedience have often — many times out of necessity and for survival — led to present-oriented rather than present- and future-oriented and/or win/win leadership decisions.

Year-round education has too often been a victim of the same ebb and flow of support, of fads and politics, tradition and resistance to change, rather than being rejected or accepted for its basic merits, its philosophy, and its long-term impact on the learning systems of today and tomorrow. It is evidenced by the knowledge that, even though California is the leading YRE state, in 1987 only 51 superintendents of 1,025 offered some version of year-round education. It is further evidenced by the knowledge that at one time 57 districts had YRE programs — and many more were considering it — when Proposition 13 pulled the rug from under the concept. Totals immediately dropped to 36 even though there was money to continue the concept. The number is growing again, but statewide, only a small portion of the youth have the opportunity to elect YRE. It is almost non-existent at the secondary level. Yet, as a number of YRE leaders have asked, "If YRE were the traditional calendar and someone proposed closing schools for three months, would the idea be wholeheartedly embraced?"

If ACSA members are to continue to provide leadership in new directions and if they are seriously to consider creative and innovative proposals designed to assist youth and communities — even, or especially, on a voluntary basis — a new approach is needed to be able to examine the depth and long range consequences of exciting proposals. Some administrators need to be willing to pilot the redesigned Challenger. More ACSA leaders may need to consider changing the calendar, at least for the 30-70 percent in most communities who are willing to volunteer or for those who actually want to be released from the long summer convention.

Year-round education is not that great by itself. It could, though, serve as a catalyst to encourage ACSA members to rethink the total future of education, and in this instance, determine whether the nine month September to June calendar should still dominate the educational time pattern when society turns the clock to the year 2000 A.D.

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